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Theatre Australia

Diane Cilento
Anthony Shaffer
interview

Vol 1 No 8

THE BRISBANE SCENE
THE DOLL - CENTREFOLD
YOUNG AND OLD



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Comment...

People have by turns been outraged, wildly enthused and left wondering what all the hub-bub's about, by our last month's comment. Our basic point, you will recall, was that it's high time more of the promotional money went into local product—arts and plays (both) together optimistically! Lately entrepreneurs of various shades have been spending fortunes on imported things and whatever one may care to say about the increased range of choice this provides our audiences, it still pends regressively to our age-old cultural orange.

Yes, it's good to see Shelia Hancock and Peter O'Toole languidly at least, and it will be good to see the Chichester Company under Keith Michell. Welcome home to him, and David Netherton (whose polished accents are so infernally on the London scene for the ABC).

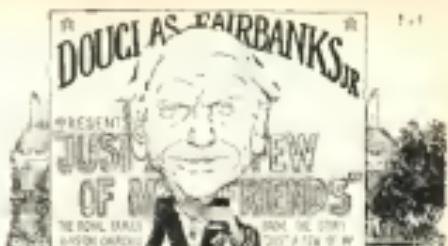
An entrepreneur complained to us that our carping against such visitors was petty, an influential director that it was "childish and insulting"; they'll cheat, they fill them with quality—and isn't that what it is all about? Certainly. Some form of internationalism is a useful cultural aim and achievement. But let the buyer beware nevertheless.

Australian plays and Australian actors erupted onto the stage in the late '60's—for a brief time—while they could effectively be pushed as sensible even enjoyable! because they were our own. Part of the push that had made that possible was a reaction to the absolute domination of our theatre scene by English Artistic Directors, English texts here for the Deaf and not intrinsically English casts.

Some sort of battle was enjoined. Voices demanded Equity make sure, and enforce rules excluding outsiders—to enable locals free reign to show their wares. Australian directors got jobs and prominence. Australian plays were included with all the appearance of normalcy in the museum display programming of the leading subsidised companies.

But the battleground now looks to be in a state of siege. And still our indigenous culture is outside the gates. Inside—by far the majority of Artistic Directors in our top companies are English, and some prominent Australian directors are left out in the cold of unemployment. Most of our state companies are farfaring their way into 1977 with first-to offerings of texts from the U.K. past and present. When equity tries to enforce its rules protecting locals by insuring equal numbers of Australians be included, the letter but not the spirit is followed. Australian born, but regular London performers, are imported too at the home contingent.

Our most persuasive commentator, I, or Max Harris reply to John Bell (?) sigh dolefully that, of course, the sensible if we haven't got the trimmings here (*T-A*) will try and dispense that in covering issues for the barest talent. And, they add, our life style is simply not the



Douglas Fairbanks Jr.—as seen by National Times cartoonist Ward O'Neill

stuff of which drama is made.

So it's time perhaps for the fight to begin again. For the siege lines to be broken so we can engage again.

Think of the gains of pushing the local product. It's a marketing question. We asked John Singleton to answer that one for us but he's so good at doing it he had to teach! The more you push it, the greater supply of quality product you'll have to push.

You have to tell the people that Williamson, de Groot, Hewett, fall the cheapseats of Hewett; Hibberd, Buso, Blair, Spears, Pyne and Bettis, are good, that Bill Blundell, Olsen, Livemore, Fitzpatrick etc., etc., and etc. . . . are what they were. And you'll have to tell that cynical little whisper that nags you with its "but they're?", simply to shut up while you get on with promoting a star system of our own. Because it *T-A* we are unequivocally confident it's what they do want—and they've got to find out as they did about Skippy Cornflakes, Reese, T.A.A. and the all Australian Export Cols.

The artists of the community have things to say to the community because they live in it and they know what makes it tick (such things!) And artists all have a burning desire to entertain. Now all of that is something communists like very much. We aren't being patronising about the great Australian G.P. but given that this is the age of The Advertisement, the rules are that communities have to be told and told with confidence.

So brace, Douglas Fairbanks Jr., we meant no personal slight. And yes Mr. Jay that think you offer can be an amiable one. It's not that we're too international a community, it's not that we're too parochial a one. The trouble is that we're not enough of either. We would dig the international much more, paradoxically, if we became a lot more parochial.

All the eternal truths from the romantic to the scandalous are running round in our little parish—unfortunately of late our theatres have stopped looking for them here. Which could mean we've stopped looking for external truths, too . . . Ah, well.

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ANNIVERSARY TOAST

I am obviously very pleased to get the Critics Award for *A Tote to Melba*. Perhaps the most pleasant thing about it for me is that this has happened exactly ten years since I wrote *White with Blue Wheats*, so it makes a nice decade. Actually that decade is being celebrated at Melbourne University—who did the original production of *White with Blue Wheats*. They're doing a season of my plays including *White with Blue Wheats*—the production that Totes to Melba—but I think *The Governor* is one of the few things I've ever done, and much more innovative than *Melba* which obviously has more popular appeal. *The French Gipsy* going national is an example of our policy of taking a more popular style of play into the community. See *The Hite Family Show* and *Desperado* for lightning streaks along a full slate like because we feel it's an exemplary production and performance. Jack Hirschert

AMERICAN TAKE-OVER

In Australia we need the likes of people who are doing first class things as opposed to second class things. So often we're labelled off with second best. I don't believe we should shut doors on art in any form—any of the live arts



That's what's wrong with America. They shouldn't close the doors to English and Australian artists. We've all got to beat off each other. However we mustn't let this—ourselves be used as a sounding ground for anything less than first class theatre. I can understand them wanting to see what this country is potentially. That's why people are coming out here. I went to the Music Festival in Sydney just for a day and a half ... It was very inspiring, but I didn't think people saw what those men were here for. I don't think they saw beyond the excitement of listening to people talk about Broadway. I saw it as a bunch of hand-headed men, claim to be what this country had no off them.

Well, we have ourselves here, and I looked and thought, "I wonder if you're thinking of this place in a possible venue for something you wish to launch in the hope that the money could be partially provided from here? It's a very clever thing to do, because the money is drying up in America and Britain. And I thought, "Okay, perhaps it's an courageous thing we can back in that brilliant belief, but it does not seem that bright home if it means we're going to give up a lot of what is ours to other people."

I fear they really come to us if they did make a decision to move in, how silly it would be for them to do so.

Maggie Fitzgerald

LUCKY STARS

J.C. Williamson's Prizewinners have taken up the production of *The Governor* and *A Tote to Melba* which usually receive a scarce performances at Melbourne's out-of-town Arden Theatre. The show which had been conceived, written, directed and performed by John Goodrich, Caroline Goldsworthy and John O'Meara will open under the J.C.W. banner at Her Majesty's, Melbourne on Saturday April 1 1977. It is the first time in 25 years that J.C.W.'s managing director Kenne Bradstock, has taken over a locally written or produced show like this; he is hoping to arrange for an original cast recording of the show in some position. He also indicated that he is considering touring it to other Australian cities at a later date.

"I think this show is world class, it has the same sort of entertainment value of something I saw on Broadway some years ago, *An Evening with Miles Nathelis and Phyllis May*. It has comedy, music and music, the three ingredients for a success, and this has been proven at the Arden, an Off-Broadway type theatre with people encouraging for ten years and over a thousand performances. I am delighted to arrange the much-needed transfer, to maintain the currency we are building the stage but over the orchestra pit, with the youth and will bring all parts of the theatre. In this way the theatre will seat about eight hundred. I consider the members of the cast are three of the most talented people in Australia, they are undoubtedly stars of tomorrow. It is a show like *Clara* or *Sanditon's Bride* by Stob and tends to be on the same merits. *The Governor* and *A Tote to Melba* is the biggest little show in town."

Kenne Bradstock



Dear Sir,

There is really very little truth in the rumor that Australians don't appeal to the Americans. We have proved that with *Some Time After You*. It is perhaps nearer the truth to say that many enterprising producers don't want to see Aussantics.

The more important issue, the main audience will understandably think that Australian actors are not competent to take the risks and the more difficult it will become to sell Australian actors on a commercial circuit. So let us stop importing amateur actors in second rate plays and accents Australian actors in first rate plays. William Merley

Dear Sir,

Through express envelope I forward invitation by name the emerging skilled apprentices of Radio and Maths.

The sheer theatricality of the two shows, as well as the imaginative gift of the puppets, reflect, in great part, to the talents of Alan Highfield, Joe Goldsworthy, Jay Economics and Gordon Matheson. It's their blood that flows through the puppets' veins.

Roger Pulten,
Centers, A.C.T.

QUOTES AND REVIEWS

TROUNCING THEM IN TAREE
WITH THE TOTE TOURING TROUP

It's been going very well. Opening night was stunning and wonderful, everyone was enthralled. We opened in Taree in a pretty dreadful place, the school hall where we had great difficulty getting in to rehearse as it was a wet day and all the children had to play in there! That was one of our best houses as far as thought, along with Grafton where we opened a new High School Hall. It was full and we made lots of money. We've been enjoyed and pleased to find that there's been much better response from the smaller towns than the big ones in attendance per capita. And apparently at the shows, perhaps because they get much fewer rooms in general. One producer has said that we've been shaking Maroochydore, and the owner I think, says and above the court and people have been coming to us only when they haven't been able to get to her. But it's been well and truly worthwhile, the actors are really enjoying the demands made on them at least the plays, with so few actors and so many parts and the demands of all the different unisoned numbers. We're technically greatly underfunded, but after the first week we've got very efficient and polished at getting the set in and out.

John Newby, Manager of the A.C.T./P/Del Tote Aragnold Project

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Reading John Synther's article in the Jan/Feb issue on the Melbourne "Theatre Restaurant" scene, it would appear that this gentleman belongs to that group of so-called "intellectuals" who steadfastly refuse to see any event in life which does not carry any social or political message. He demands entertainment just for the sake of entertainment and indulges in the facile-like passing of his life away without caring about various aspects of the material, and toots out "secret", "unpublished", "secretive", "unpublished" etc and all the other need-catchers that the idiotic neophytes and the paranoid revolutionaries use so glibly and so frequently!

One of the reasons for the success of shows such as *Tide*, *John's* and *Requiem's* is that they deliberately cater to the rheumatically forgetful masses. Mr & Mrs Average. Most out of 100 people attending these two versions are only bringing along their Thursday nighty-a-nighty relaxed "party" atmosphere, tons of laughter and no social comment! They are not the ones that "have nothing to contribute". and they certainly don't share Mr Synther's dubious belief in maintaining the "worksheet", an ideal approach which seems to be so thoroughly obvious to him.

QUERIES

OUT OF CREATIVE WATERS?

The A.P.G. (Goss National) in 1977—and what will that mean for its future? The Melbourne-based group which has members within like Hibberd, Penrudd, Williamson and Ostry, has had Mississipi's "Mississippi Lightning" X'Kape playing in Perth—so bad notices (see p. 26) and the group-owned Hills Penrudd Show driving in Adelelaide for "House Meets Meets These Puffin Fantasy" back home a click. The most frequent comment about touring performances I have seen is that they look like fishes out of water away from the sugar-refined at the Pyramids! Should they just get back there and keep doing what they're doing best, make parties out of local variety, and develop rough new ways of doing both of which can be fed back but subsequently pasted by others?

FOR SERVICES TO THEATRE

The CGP was a courageous and enterprising—wonderful culmination to over 30 years in the theatre. But that doesn't mean I am going to stop! I'm actively researching for a new one-woman show. "The Tree," several of my friends, women writers, will work with me. Lucy Hockstall, Mary Gunkel, and Ruth Edwards. Together we want to do something with the same warmth and respect as Steven Reineke does.

Nan Penrudd, now D.B.E. If for services to Australian theatre!

REGIONAL RENEWAL

"Last year we had to find a hand-to-mouth existence. The board gave us the six week rest for protection only after the previous one had opened. Our grant for 1977 (\$32,000 from the Australian Council and \$20,000 from New South Wales government) enables us to pass a season of plays in a central venue in Newcastle—last year we were 1500s out of town in the University (without their generosity we wouldn't have got started)! We are presenting four plays with a linking theme (either some or a usual world), one at three other world premieres by John O'Deaugherty, and we are touring the state with an Australian double bill. Our aim for the year is to increase audiences, to increase membership, and to increase our community work, particularly in schools. Under community director Michael Caulfield the last is in good hands."

Toni Clark
Artistic Director Hunter Valley Theatre Company

AUSTRALASIAN PAPERS

The tenth AUALLA (the Australian, the UK Language and Literature conference) was held earlier this year in Wellington, New Zealand. A Rhodes-Australian contributor, Marks Thorsen gave a paper on the Australian scene, topics discussed ranged through dialect to Hendrix and the Chinese; performances were offered by Arkadyev, at some German Expressionists, and on a play by N.Z. playwright Greg Harrison. Joseph Mungrope (see "Books"—

by the way, his Masters and Father will be done by the CGT Trust later this year) and Jennifer Compton became involved in an amateur drama about playrights and their relationship to their local theatre scene.

NOT THE THEATRE CAPITAL?

There are a whole lot of reasons why Canberra, the country's capital doesn't have a regular professional theatre company—but and feasibility among them could certainly support one, after all Robert does. But in many ways we are in a fortunate position here—in the moment one of the few organisations who can do huge box shows. I get the best of both worlds, professional experts and all the cheapness has to offer.

It is tragic for a writer to impose a professionally ruling on the theatre, it restricts both access and techniques. Actors are, and have been since the moment that basically non-aesthetic, they have a need to act, whether they are paid or not. And it is absurd that a professional technician can't teach a novice to keep his special equipment during a show. Union rules make artists into technicians—admittedly technicians are artists.

Russ McGregor, Director Canberra Repertory Theatre

ON THE WHITE TRACK



events should be an alternative to theatre of enrichment—comprehending, but not replacing it.

In conclusion I suggest that Mr Smythe does a little honest self-analysis into his motives for writing critiques. Opinionated he may be—Give him a rest!

Yours faithfully
John Fisher,
Editor, Victoria.

Dear Sirs,

May I ask who it is that La Boite Theatre, Brisbane, out of all the Australian theatres in Australia, is the only one that gets constant ribbing of its productions?

When Theatre Australia came into being, I thought the police were to consider only professional theatre. It seems to me a bit deaf of you know.

The fact is La Boite's Hibberd is not high even as amateur associations, particularly from Sydneyans, and also my collaboration with Brian Thomson who will return from London to create the stage design."

A new play from Australia's most down-garish writer would be a welcome addition to any theatre season. What will make the premiere of Peter Allen's *Dig Tupp* something more is that it marks his return to playwriting after an absence of fourteen years.

The new play *Dig Tupp* is a comedy of manners or the lots of them seen in a Point Piper apartment with a wife who dabbles in politics, a husband who dabbles in law and a nephew who is encouraged to clatter in books, the play mostly reveals the private lies behind the public veneer of Sydney's very special world of radical chic.

"In the company I look forward to renewing some valued associations, particularly from Sydneyans, and also my collaboration with Brian Thomson who will return from London to create the stage design."

Jim Sharman

THE EDITOR

Admittedly, much of the most interesting—but the personal and career histories of the members of both companies make up for old age and tired names, and the stock adds which hoist all music halls. The people that Takk & John have working for them are a treasure trove of talent.

My simple states—"We want to make a change from the tried old forms, however polished their presentation, than we must suddenly the pioneers by putting our bums on other seats."

May I point out that Takk & John's have consistently put bums on seats over the last 90 years! Is not possible that wanting to be the Q.P.s has put these bums on those seats?

One of the many reasons that the Q.P. won't go to the theatres after one or two years, they have been either ignored, or treated like misfits who must be instructed as to what they should like or dislike. If theatre is going to survive in this country, their attention must be paid to all sections of the community, who will, we hope, make up the audience.

Let us review that place like the "Pyramids Trapdoor" & "The Last Laugh" are now opened. Yes we should see a "change from the tried old forms", but to an alternative style, not a replace them, just as threat of social comment and

Spotlight

ACTORS' NEWS

Bruce Spence, John Kinnane, Sandra MacGregor, Peter Mafford, Richard Phillips, Peter Collingwood, Stanley Walsh in *The Old Toss*; Alzheimer (John Clarke directing).

Sandra Geiss, Irene Hassan, Steven Chisholm, Edward Hippel, Barry Hill, Bruce Mylne, Frank Thring in the 1st T.C.'s *School for Scoundrels* (Peter Lavelle directing).

Brian Jones, Kevin Mylne, Valerie Hodge, Debbie Day, Dorothy Vernon, Anne Penhaligon, Ruth Dakinall in the 5 A.T.C.'s *Cherry Orchard* (Colin George directing).

Roddy Milson joins Julian T.V.-pol. Barry Desveaux in the 1st T.C.'s production of William Monk's *Intel*. *The Club*.

Lynell Rose is off to Britain to play Doctor in Love.

Reynaud du Plessis recently in Tasmania, is off to the Tasmanian Theatre Company for Sound of Music and *Brave's*.

Norman Kaye is *The Fair Day* at the M.T.C.

Gloria Dawn is doing the Gloria Dancer Show at Music Laffs on July 1.

Ron Grimes is back on the Islands—and P-Wallace Estate, Shirley Holmes in *Cinder* and Cleopatra Dame Gosselin is the new Janet in the long running *Misty Haven* Show (now 15 months in Melbourne). Joanne Ray recently performed the soloist role in the best P.H.S. of many he's seen around the world.

New dates in Perth's Playhouse: Ian Scott from Melbourne and Ian Waddey from Sydney. And Carole Skinner is opening in Wilkinson's *The Government House* there this month.

DIRECTORS' NEWS

Robert Gossman is directing for the Gas Tree Allan Apakura's *Hilltop*. *The Norman Conquest* which will be on offer at the Seymour Centre. Rumours of a *Garrison Blandford* is being sought by the Town Councils' rate.

Ken Healey, critic with the Canberra Times was director of *Shout!* for the Canberra Opera. They've just moved into new premises—the Y.W.C.A. Centre, with a permission for rehearsal space! Patrick's John Melville was to, but had no rehearsal.

George Matibay was invited last month in a reshuffled heading at Canberra House London for the Association of Australian Authors. We are told by the A.A.A. that it is recognised by the Australian High Commission as being the official theatrical group of Australia in the U.K. So there.

Kath Metheny will lead the priggish Chichester Theatre Company as a sort of Australian cast year-starting with the Perth Festival then round the island. Bob Spungen (see J.C.W.) is organizing it. The two days an other will be The Apple Cart and *Death of a Salesman*. Will Metheny play the Mac? Or *Godot*?

New Director of Youth Activities at Brian Easdale's Twelfth Night Theatre is Jonathan Barrer from New Zealand. Production: Lloyd Nakara. It follows in the O.T.C.

Auckland's Memory Theatre—1977 programme includes Bruce's *Twelfth and Durante*, John Power's *The Last of the Knucklers*, Arthel Pease's *Hello and Goodbye*, and New Zealand writer, Robert Lord's comedy *Wifey Honey*. Among the personnel listed is sometime M.T.C. director and actor Jonathan Merly.

NOT ON A HIGH

DIANE CILENTO came home with an ANTHONY SHAFFER world premiere at the Theatre Company. RICK BILLINGHURST, Artistic Director of La Boite, is returning after



A World Premier! From the pen of the man who brought us *Shout!* The Queensland Theatre Company presents Englishman Anthony Shaffer's *Widow Wears Red*... now rechristened by its original title *For Years / Couldn't Wear My Black . . .* It was really a Tryout, Yes . . . a Try out. But it's more polite to call it a "World Premier!" Shaffer himself is talking. With him is Diane Cilento, our own star of stage and screen in the museumum of the S.G.I.O. theatres where the night before this try out opened.

"Yesterday, before the curtain went up—in the afternoon—we had a reversal. We were making changes then," said Diane. She had made the trip out in advance of the playwright, representing Shaffer with the O.T.C.'s Joe McCullum (interior), in a kind of dress rehearsal for the piece.

"I had brought out from London a tape recording that we'd made," said Diane. "We'd made it of the whole play—to see what didn't work. It's the way a lot of people in America now do it. I think Neil Simon works his plays like that. She herself will be the play's next director—when it's done in London."

"I think that her . . . Joe McCullum . . . is her difficultie," advised Shaffer. "Because the play, possibly, when he got it, was not in the right shape. He had very little time."

Shaffer did not get into Shabbie until very late in the piece—only shortly before the play opened. He seemed to be holding a mild rebuff even to talk about production or script at all—certainly in any particular detail. Diane was naturally most ready to evaluate near the play—about what she termed its "casual dramatic structure. But technically I was more inclined to relax and欣赏 MacCollum.

"He changed the script after a lot of staff had been already blocked and moved. . . . Perhaps it could not be expected enough in the time to accommodate the changes we made. Under the circumstances, he did very well."

What about the cast? Both are in agreement:

Shaffer: "I think they did remarkably well considering."

Gilbert: "I do, too. I think they did very well."

Considering? Anthony Shaffer, irresistibly slender, "I think it's very difficult for a cast doing a play of this kind—especially one that requires between the light and the dark (between comedy and the serious). It's difficult being able to concentrate it with an audience when they don't know the length of a laugh, when they don't really know quite what weight a more thrilling scene might have . . . thus, the cast, are slightly in the position of having to look it!"

Then visited Diane Gilmore talking about audiences and about the S.G.I.O. theatre where in a recent year she played the lead in *The Taming of the Shrew* a couple of years ago. "Yes,

HORSE

der her arm for the Queensland
med her and the author the



Last night the audience really had control over the actors—because they, the actors, just didn't know where the laughs were coming. That was very odd.

"One thing I have noticed—the audience span of awareness is limited. You know, they come here after work ... and the play did run a long time. One ought to guess how much an audience can take. That really means laughter—or doesn't getting the gags." All in all, the evening seemed something less than a total success. She looked around her. "And there's something else. This theatre ... I mean, inside it's like someone's really who hasn't eaten for three days. Instead of being audience it's cover. It's strange there's no play in. Actors have to play all very hard, because you seem to be away from the audience in a funny way. And this is a show that should really be quite near the audience. In theatre we were often reassured by how good the actors were we were close up, then?"

Was it too long last night?

They were in agreement again. "Yes?"

When are you going to cut it?"

Shaffer invites the question. Diane responds with an enigma: "Abby ... that looks into a theatre mask."

I asked Shaffer about the play's origins where it stood on the writer's development. The successful writer was still elusive. "We sort of ... it's a little early ... its association with them it seems by the fact that we've just done it now for the first time. It was written some time ago—and



G.T.C. rehearsal of *For伊ean I Couldn't Wear My Black* ...

recently it was rewritten."

Where then, does it go from here?

"We are going to do it in London. There is a suggestion we do it at Greenwich—we've had an offer to do it there. Whether we do go there, or take it straight to the West End, or transfer from Greenwich to the West End ... we're not absolutely certain."

The playwright's other plays?

"I like plays of triangulation ... but I think I'm going to try to make them better heavier bodied in the future than this. This is quite a light piece. And I've done a lighter piece in London. But ... I'm very difficult to say given in what way I personally want to go. Like all writers I can look back well ten a pattern in my walks. There is sometimes a desire to break that pattern. There is sometimes a desire to go further with the same pattern. It's a little vague. I know that a jump has to be made—a leap, a leap has to be made. But in which direction? Not absolutely certain."

There was really no pursuing that.

Diane Coissac talked about her trip home to work with the G.T.C. and particularly her

test role in an extract.

When you come into a Company from the outside, when you're brand new to the ensemble, there's a difficulty for actors to think you're going to be very much at on your high horse." A high horse and not seem somewhat living life Colombo was in the habit of riding. They think you'll treat them in somehow a different way. You have to overcome that, immediately—so that they know you're an actor too ... on the same level as them, in the same box as them ... and that you're all working together on the same thing."

What of her future plans? In fact there's a remarkable variety already quite apart from establishing her own respond community in North Queensland and directing Shaffer's play to Greenwich, she's got two films in the pipe line—one here and one in England. She's also been approached to write a play from the Kafka short story *Ripeness* to an Academy. But unlike Shaffer she was careful not to sound too certain in talking about what might be ahead.

"Yes, the future ... I'll think about the future—tomorrow."



... See Dan Bouchal's review page 76

ARTS for the DRINKING MAN

by Don Mackay



Don Mackay

It was an accident really. Two actors and a stage manager from the Players Caravan were out doing a schools tour of Victoria with an Australian history/literature programme, "The Great Australian Historical Exhibition". One night, after dinner at the Beaconsfield pub, the stage manager started playing guitar and the rest of the bar joined in the songs and asked for requests.

"What do you blokes do for a job?"
"Actors!"

"Is Beaconsfield?" (surprised reply)

"Yeah, playing at the High School tomorrow."

"Why don't you do a bit of a turn for us?"

So the show was performed with interrelated songs and occasional pauses to reread to the bar for pleasure.

Rhumba informed us that night the publicans made a speech to thank the boys for bringing "good class family entertainment back to Beaconsfield". And an idea was born.

Along with other theatre people I talk high-minded when getting out among people and reaching new audiences, but it wasn't until a few years later when I went to the Victorian Arts Council that I realised that the natural theatre place in country towns, the local pub, had never been utilised by the Arts Council, or anyone very much like rock bands.

So we started to reshape the Australian material for pub clientele and called it *The Australian Pub Show*.

The two actors from the Beaconsfield pub—Garry Gray and James Wright—were prepared to do it again. François Henni, who had previously been stage manager was on tour with Spike Milligan so two Australian folk veterans were recruited—Peter McDonald from Muog Boab's Bicycle Band and Devil Town from Bush whackers and Bullockies Bush Band.

It was establishing from the original historical source material—Mark Twain, Henry Lawson, Anthony Trollope, the Verulam and those well-known writers Thoreau and Aspin—working with pub

audiences, when cut to the bone and played in a boozed style. The transcript of the Ned Kelly trial became a dinkum highlight of the evening which presented a striking contrast to the lighter material which preceded it.

Music was selected from a wealth of current songs, bush ballads, war songs and so on. Mans' hands were used for instruments.

The Pub Show went out on a six week tour of Victoria. In March of 1976, but due to the demand was extended twice.

It has been a happy breakthrough to new audiences. The fact that the pub usually isn't well seated and frequently needs for recruitment indicates that we'll just be getting somewhere right!

It hasn't replaced the regular Arts Council programme in Victoria, but mostly compensates such tours as The ABC's *Family Circus*, Canadian Music Theatre, Victoria State Opera.

The 1977 tour began on February 17 in Melbourne prior to five weeks in Queensland. It will visit Tasmania, South Australia and play yet another year in Victoria between now and September.

The show is an interesting development in another way. The four artists are playing two school programmes during the day while on tour. The actors are playing the original isolated school programme and the musicians an Australian folk music show.

Henni's about to the *Australian Pub Show*. (And what's more it doesn't need any kind of subsidy!!)



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QUEENSLAND ARTS COUNCIL

THE ALL AUSTRALIAN PUB SHOW

Gerry Hutchinson

THE ALL AUSTRALIAN PUB SHOW Resident and directed by Don Mackay
GLARY GRAY, DAVID AYRE, PETER McDONALD, JAMES WRIGHT

Having just had the somewhat chastening experience of producing a couple of shows at the Great Eastern Theatre, a dubious venue at best, and at a rather tame time of year (February, I expect), the argument over audience versus art has a particular poignancy for me. Dorothy Hewitt's "The Double Ditch" and Alma de Grazia's "Cordley" played to a total of about 30,000 people. They're not very good, and whether or not it's the fault of our direction, or the plays, it's rather disheartening to think that there isn't an audience in every part of Melbourne for theatre plays slightly off the beaten track. I'm sure the experience of the Australian Performers' Group last year will tell that out as well. It's easier to go to the stage when unless you've got a subsidy from some government or another, or have won a lottery, professional production is well nigh impossible. I'd calculate the loss per show at about \$10,000, when costs present. Consequently, it's back to the sensible budget, and venues like La Mama.

If that is the case, then it makes the discovery of the *All Australian Pub Show* a veritable philosopher's stone. And the mining of it is profitable.

One such female was discovered here by the AFG, with the Hills Family Show—which is still staging revivals in Adelaide and Sydney at a break-neckly employment within the group. The formula involves the use of old vaudeville tunes, sometimes seriously, sometimes in a send-up-dealing vernacular, musical maps, intermissions, dancing, stand up on-down comedy—anything at all. This amateur, adolescent rough-theatrical circus sort of subculture remembrance in those two years we have seen the centralists, which unites with the nostalgia of those who did in an establishment of solid bourgeoisie family "feeling."

Audie from the Hills, and Steve "Spud" Yulee, etc., it has been the theatre restaurant shows that have cashed in on the general idea. Not only the standard mad ball passing throwing villainous malodour, but shows such as *Crashin' At The Disney* recently seen at the Last Laugh. The Bulby Birriny's desperation—the sophisticated art visualists—used a bit of grittiness—a bit of camp and some super visual/movement ideas as in their *Black and White Show*. This was so simple and so perfect that it is one of the best achievements of any kind of theatre in Melbourne of the last few years.

But talent of any kind is rare. Even the gentle mockery of the Hills Family Show has quality, but not necessarily in the techniques—but in the idea itself, and in the quality of performance that makes it something特殊.

Looking at the current range of productions in this general line, there'd have to be some disappointment with the way old formulas are repeated, and the easy way taken. But they all seem to be popular, which says something.

Take The All Australian Pub Show, devised and directed by Don Mackay. This has one innovation, which is that it is immensely touring bush pubs. It would be great if the Arts Councils who are apportioning this year were to keep the circuit open for other acts which might like a come-upcoming entertainment—Stephens Circus, for instance.

The show itself again uses a venerable Northumbrian bunch of swing-Australian in theme, and some readings from old texts. The singing by Gaele, Iwene and Peter McDonald is excellent, and the recitations by Gary Gray and James Wright do the job humanely enough. The teensy bit pastes with it is not only that it sticks to relatively Australian pretences about Pompeii, Galves, Ned Kelly, boats, but then it's rather dull, in the end. If it ever gets a wingsuit, there'd be fine but hardly necessary. It tries to tap some of the carnivalesque and mirthfulness of the pub, but misses the opportunity of dealing with the pub as an institution of importance. The peripheral material that is used is relevant and amusing, but doesn't make anything happen. A pub show that used the vast range of jokes and stories about

drinking might have made for an interesting night out. Anything for that.

Still, the *Pub Show* as it stands is friendly enough to escape whatever it is performed to up in the bush, given the special circumstances of its performance. That is, where it's performed it will be a special success. I don't think it would stand much of a chance in the poshly cultured pub circuits in the city.

The *Pub Show* works well enough in its low key manner because it has to rely on its audience to pull it through. The *Jump Never Again*, *Blissness* at the Last Laugh hasn't. It only lasted a fortnight, and was a major disappointment to those of us expecting big things from Noreen. The music by Sarah de Jong over banjo and ukelele, the writing being and pretentious I don't know that I can condone by the ukelele/banjo half that I can't accept an update of cabaret—it is just that this particular show isn't very good.

It deals with the career of the Great Comedié, a little Montreal lady who progresses from Nazi Germany to Australia. She has scenes with Hitler, in Nazi West, with a punk rocker, and an All-Germany six-piece. There is a narrator and a female caricature of a critic. The less said about all that, the better. *Blissness* might have had a better chance, or at least the idea might have had a better chance, in a theatre. As it stands it is not good, and also inappropriate to the Last Laugh.

So perhaps it all gets down to using the golden formula. Certainly *Outback* is paid off on weekends, is done fairly well, and the postage musical, *The Pavement and All That Jazz* too. Audiences obviously prefer these kinds of shows, where the material is gentle, amusing and safe, to anything else. They seem to prefer the known in any form (David Williamson or George Gershwin or *The General*) to the unknown. Merlin isn't a disaster, but it doesn't make a tangible future for the theatre as a whole. Without an audience for the general there eventually won't be an audience for anything.



James Wright, David Ayre, Gary Gray & Peter McDonald

LA MAMA

NO WORRIES NORM AND AHMED

Suzanne Spunner

BEST OF AND ABOUT IT by Alan Bates La Mama Theatre
Caroline Violi is a Student 10 x TT Director: West Callan
Music: Stephen Clift Aliens: Bruce Kerr
Cast: CLIFF ELLIOT, ANNE GILL, ANDREW LEITCH, LINDY CLARK, DAVE JACE, MICHAEL RUMY, RICHARD HANSON, FRANCIS DENNIS, KELLER

NO WORRIES by Clif Elliot La Mama Theatre Carlton
Music: Stephen Clark TT Director: Bruce Kerr
Cast: CLIFF ELLIOT, ANNE GILL, ANDREW LEITCH, LINDY CLARK, DAVE JACE, MICHAEL RUMY, RICHARD HANSON, FRANCIS DENNIS, KELLER

Currently at La Mama for a three-week season are two Australian plays, Clif Elliot's *No Worries* and *No Worries* having its first performance while Sydney playwright Alex Biagi's *Norm and Ahmed* is now some ten years old. In his first performances in 1967 at La Mama were the occasions of zealous police action and a court case followed in which charges of obscenity were brought but that was in the days of Mr. Rylands renowned lenient daughter. Today things fortunately have changed, though to say that Australian society has really matured would be to belittle the influence of the Okkerbergs' vision of *No Worries*.

For, save for this occasion, to the adventurous—a female role, the partner's wife who makes a hell-fisted grab for independence—the concerns of *No Worries*, the depth of their investment and the play's narrative saturation all place the play in the context of the *Timbers*. This is no fault in itself but for a play written now it is.

Set in the living room of a suburban Melbourne house, *No Worries* covers a period of ten days during which time the man of the house, an elderly owner, has a big say—some \$4 thousand dollars—and manages to send it back to where it came as readily as it was earned. He is aided and abetted by his boozey crook who willingly if a bit unconvincingly explains Norm's wife has a understanding of occasionally ridiculous wife is trying to get him to "Chaddy" to buy a new carpet for the dilapidated living room. She also is petitioning for a loan of \$60 dollars to start a giftshop with a girl friend while her neophyte teenage daughter needs a mere 40 dollars for a school excursion—inevitably neither of them see symmetry of the world and it is only

through haggling his mate that she wife soon finds out how much he wins. No doubt a terrible situation, happening everyday somewhere in our too-bob-each-way society. However biyeddy is dedicated Indian Cliff Elliot does not enlighten us further and yet may as well have listened to a transcription of a tape recording. The acting for the most part was uninteresting, often being it rarely conformed the audience who were content with bally laughs at the self-congratulatory presentation of an Australian type. Only Lindy Clark as the girlfriend of Chaddy lay the most repellent poker ever to hit the stage—give any depth to her performance. For her things still mattered, perhaps because she had not yet succumbed to Uncle Dickie's influence completely; they were only engaged. She did had some fun whereas the wife was well and truly extinguished. Overall the performance was unconvincing, sloshy peasant and herring in mobility.

In thankful contrast *Norm and Ahmed*, had everything *No Worries* lacked. Set on a desultory sunlit day at night, it was staged in the car park outside La Mama where the two-faced Middle aged Norm, former set of *Timbers* and present *white* white-collar worker associate Ahmed, a young Pakistani student set here on the Colombo Plan. The play covers the period of these forty minute encounters. Director Mark Collas played it fluent and close to the bone, building up the aggression subtlety and communicating it in such a way to make it implausible that the intelligent, perceptive Ahmed was put off guard by Norm's pattern of apparent sympathy. Charming was complete and no less true to life for the superficial contradictions. We even at points feel irritated by Norm as he recalls the virtues of the rocky country and laments the death of his wife; it is quite possible that he did just want someone to talk to. Similarly Ahmed is not a stereotypical, a sensible but nevertheless speaks in the overblown style of someone who has learnt english from the likes of the Raj. As Ahmed Bruce Kerr was excellent, he fully captured the speech inflections and mannered intelligence and dignity throughout, no matter how problematic Ahmed may at times stand to us. While Clif Elliot managed to invoke his most ridiculous question patterns with rampant aggression and rapidist drive. A sense of forbidding aggression is built up not merely verbally in the words or the tone in which they are spoken. But rather in the ambiguous gestures of manhood, the too heavy hand shake, the too rapid to lay-on-the-back, and the like, instant turning into the others eyes, the suggestion of gaudy libido in binary and unconscious heterosexual encounter. The acting portrayed the invasion of privacy lapidary without constituting it.

In the final minutes of the play Norm will no longer or albeit passivisation figure on Ahmed. The violence which erupts is horrifying and shocking. One's first response is to wonder where it came from, then instantly we are drawn back to the class in *Revolts*—and realize the latent menace was always present, and it would only be a question of time before it was unleashed.

Norm and Ahmed has not dated, one only need consider the recent overtones of the press coverage of the recent "Pokies" incident that illustrates how little things have really changed irrespective of the changes of the White Australia Policy.

N.B. "Chaddy" refers to the notorious consumer period—the fifteen shopping complex of Ched's Wares, an outlet Melbourne Suburb.

Suzanne Spunner is theatre critic of the Melbourne Times.



Clif Elliot as Norm and Bruce Kerr as Ahmed in *Norm and Ahmed*

ERIC DARE

HATS

Raymond Stanley

an marked audience of show bits and allied folk—including tourism management representatives—performed this little attraction of their own devising as a showcase for their talents. Eric Gars, who is probably best known for his Liverbirds, the Lindsay Kemp Conspiracy and Let My People Come is just as proudly presenting this work as an effort for public consumption.

Apparently Miss Rita Mary and her company at 125 are ending the world tour of a vaudeville revue at Melbourne's Palais, by visiting the much smaller Playbox has been booked. Undoubtedly Rita comes on with just the two Australian members Ross Chaffiner and Colette Mann. But Miss Mary has never minded, in fact each entrant, and the two are forced to perform the entire show on their own. Rita does make brief semi-appearances, a stage tag here, an act there, her costume shown off in all its glory, well once in an elusive dance she is thrown across the stage by Chaffiner in mistake for Mann.

The understandables are ridiculous and limited entertainers, repeating their frolics again and again, demanding the constant of gags and脚下笑 throughout. So the audience will not forget what a noble job they are going to enact: "the show goes on," every few minutes come the reminders of Rita's telephone stat, until the big number—despite huge build up the star fails to appear. The understandables might however do their improved show in the inevitable intervals. More performs a song and dance number, evokes her "litter" and Chaffiner—red evoking the fat film—repeats the same number in drag. He even does a shockingly impersonation of W.C. Fields. And so the show proceeds. It really is only a 10-minute old fashioned amateur revue still extended beyond all limits.

Mann and Chaffiner are a rare couple with unreplicated try-out—indeed ready to go down to get out of their present clout. They display how real gifts that their singing, dancing or therapeutic is little more than competent. Neither appears to be a natural comic, nor posses much verbal

talent personality. Maybe in ten years, with the minimum of luck and much experience, they will be in the Lieutenant and Queen class. But on present showings, not now. Nearly everything is overdone, every point carried inconsequently home. Even such modesty can have some subtlety.

The two have set themselves an impossible task. No doubt they believe they are displaying versatility; all they really show is a constant one-level mediocrity. To indicate they are far away and not merely possessing themselves apart is required of the level they can attain. An unqualified vital, which includes an audience has no prior doubts about, possibly can get away with it. Rita is too much of the one track would be a loss.

There is one respite moment at the end of the vaudeville—surprisingly out of context—when the duo sing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow". It makes us feel all that has gone before. Had they been able to sustain a second half devoted to a miscellany of puns and straight numbers, with perhaps some patter and dance routines one may have walked from the theatre convinced that had was major talents in the making.

One has no wish to dismally bewailing gauntlet who have been brave and stubborn enough to do their own thing. And in fact one must repeat what all the last night audience appeared to adore their antics, laughed and constantly applauded. It is just possible that, based on mediocre TV variety shows, audiences will be easily satisfied with the few possessed and give them support. Naturally this will be fine for Mann and Chaffiner, provided they realize they must never press such a low gag and tact line must really provide proof of versatility—which means bringing in better and more experienced and original songs writers.

When all is said, surely a show which consists of two unknown performers deliberately being methodically backed by a 4-piece orchestra, playing 42 tracks in the first half and 36 in the second is overcooked in \$5.50 a seat?

RATE A vaudeville house divided women and men—opposite: Rita Mary and Ross Chaffiner. Opened at 27 October 1970. Stage South Musical Services. Economy Russell. Featuring COLETTE MANN and RON CHAFFINER

Towards the end of last year the young and enterprising Colette Mann and Ross Chaffiner opened the Playbox for three nights and before



Colette Mann & Ross Chaffiner in HATS



PETER CURRIE (Mao Webster) and CAROLE SHRIVER (Doris Lenzell) in *Suspicion of the Doll*. See also *Castrol*.

OLD TOTE THEATRE COMPANY

THE FATHER

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

THE DOLL TRILOGY

EVENING STAR PRODUCTIONS

THE TRAINING RUN

Katherine Brisbane

THE FATHER by August Strindberg. Adapted by Bush Braithwaite. Directed by Max Cullen. Design by John Fawcett. Lighting by David Fawcett. Sound by Garry Pritchard. Music by Alan Perryman. Casting: Richard Morris. Under Stage Manager: Michael Phillips. Set Design: Michael Meldrum. Wardrobe: Alison Britton. Make-up: Shirley Charnell. Hair: Frederick Gosther.

THE DOLL TRILOGY by Ray Lawler. Staged Seven Theatre Melbourne. Written: 12.3.77 and 19.3.77. Directed by John Sumner. Adapted by Alan Perryman. Set Design: Peter MacQuarrie. Costumes: Carolin Schmitt. Hair: Wendy Bailey. Make-up: Murray Baker. Stage Manager: Nancy White. Casting: Garry Moore. Sound: Bruce Mylrea. Production: Peter Curran. Stage Manager: David McPherson. Stage Manager: Alan Innocent. Cast: Alan Currie (Mao Webster), Peter Curran (John Fawcett), Alan Mylrea (Oliver Lenzell), Carolin Schmitt (Doris Lenzell), Nancy Baker (Barney Moore), Bruce Mylrea (Nancy White), Garry Moore (John Hulme), Alan Innocent (David McPherson). Extras: Christine Adams, Paul Corrigan, Langan Moore, Diane Lark, Carole Shriver, Wendy Baker, Bruce Mylrea, Alan Lenzell, Alan Innocent, Alan Mylrea, Peter Curran, Jennifer Goss, Sarah Denner.

LAST MATCHING PAGE by Murray Rutherford. Based on the novel by Eric Rohmer. Directed by W. Cullen. Designed by Max Cullen. Set Design by Alan Perryman. Wardrobe: Alan Perryman. Casting: Shirley Charnell. Hair: Michael Clayton. Make-up: Alan Perryman. Stage Manager: Alan Currie. Production: Peter Curran. Stage Manager: Nancy McDonald. Stage Manager: Garry Moore.

August Strindberg's gloomy, meschistic portrait of a man being destroyed by a house full of women is now on stage at the Parade Theatre. So far, and my task is to give it some sort of assessment.

"Why The Father?", one asks oneself. Death as the title attire. What makes them? Stone black Nordic earth so weighty against The Foolish and the Stoic, The Adolescent, Cooper and Christine and so on in the castlist section. Not good enough? Well then it is a flag-vehicle for an actor who needs to play a role like this. Yes, well Richard Mylett occurs himself possibly well in the role but certainly there is none of the sense of training commitment by the theatre that can go with the growth of a great performance. The production, the contemporary translation, this clever, otherwise safe, all seemed to dispense the insights of the cast and less the play itself and helplessly imposed.

I am trying hard to imagine what various might have been forced to those in charge of

presenting this production. The brochure does enjoy the play as exemplified a "never failing theme—the basic institutions of marriage". But the theme of this production does pull one longer for more startling variations on it—Miss Warren's Prostitution, for example, or Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Or even—but no—Look Back in Anger. These are times when a play is right for itself but surely, whatever the extremes of the present society we have yet reached the level of importance and incision which can rival *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

The third reason for choosing a play like this with a respected place in world history but no immediate appeal, that is the educational one, of bringing to light and life a work of literature. The Old Tote Theatre Company has brought from London to direct the play Euan Sarsfield who has also translated it and Douglas Peng to design it. It is not a criticism of their native talent to say that the result is out of sympathy with the audience but a confirmation of the fact that you cannot produce great theatre the way you can find even if it is open to question whether great plays by setting up an International circuit. Because theatre is by its very nature a paradox and depends for its greatness upon a spontaneous communal creative act by actors, designers and audience. Bush Braithwaite's high-pitched domestic verbiage resounds from an audience in a small world of designer's artifice. Douglas Peng's reddish soft-coloured set is a theatrical device, not an environment for suffering. It makes us part of the dispassionate report of the play by presenting in the role of the bass set set by set and playing shadows in the empty walls—not it may be but without passion.

Clutter. I will admit, can obscure a play and Mr Braithwaite they say that by chapters off the archaisms of realism one may come at the spiritual qualities more finely. I would contest that it is through the chance of that oppressive period that the personal strengthenings and breakdowns of the author emerges. But whatever the results, the undeniably fact is that *The Father* is a boring meeting with a cast that never puts it together as a team, allowing at best a half-baked workshop, coming as if forever condemned to unfamiliar territory. I must except from the general gloom the actress Angela Pritchard who manages the child-Births with a concentration of feeling worthy of the author.

It is that sympathy of actor and audience response, so finely stated from *The Father*, that made the first performances in Melbourne of *The Doll* unique such an emotional occasion, an occasion so far exceeded in intensity the sum of its parts. For me it was a magnificent event, a kind of vindication of the Australian theatre. Like most of the people in that audience I carried into the theatre emotional memory of *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* and its place in our history, of that immature flowering of our drama in the 50s and the disillusion that followed, of Ray Lawler's hopes and fears in a writer, his writing absurd and his coming home, and that brave new attempt to come to terms with his Australia. The two new plays were respectfully but faithfully received by a press and public used to thinking in terms of Lawler's shopping list and in whose little circuits of craftsmanship what *Kid Brother* is seemed a bit too much like yesterday's vegetables.

But performance in a trilogy on that measure in February '72 was another matter altogether. Such adoration from both actors and audience one edition has the privilege of feeling in the theatre. The performances were good, at room even outstanding, but they were moved by the empathy of the audience to a height which transcended skill. Literally enveloped the footlights and enveloped us affectively from inside as she unveiled the pale tender flesh of her weary old Burns. Sandy Dent bringing to vivid life an immigrant Nancy, the one grown upon the frozen strange world of *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*. Bruce Mylne looking remarkable like the young Lawler as Birney.

An observer had the need to do tribute to an occasion probably unique in our theatre history, an author receiving a standing ovation not just for the excitement of a new achievement, nor—on with Penry Williams's success last year—the Old Tales *The Season at Sarsenwell's* last year—in renewed respect for an old achievement, but in human acknowledgement of something which is universally and mutually ours. A prophet can succeed at last in his own country.

The occasion's achievement was to put the plays in perspective. The last two gained by the treatments and in a way Birney of the Seven remote *Dad* did not. The first two plays are period pieces and as such have great charm. But *The Doll* is contemporaneous. It carries as all great drama does not just the physical context of place, time and action but also conceptually the spiritual climate when *Kid Brother* and *Dinner Guests* look back at the 30s and 40s from the tranquillity of an older society. *The Doll* is a study of immaturity written with all the desperate hope, love and emotional pessimism of a reconstituted adolescence in adolescent society. There are discord and even antagonism in seeing the plays together, but the experience enables us to reflect further those values unique to *The Doll* as first fruits of Australian drama. It was a Birnenfeldt acknowledged by an audience on the growing-up '70s of the simple power of his old fashioned qualities of love, sentimentality and innocence within a structure unfriendly malicious and tainted, that brought Ray Lawler, playwright, home to us last night.

Though hardly in the same category another play should not go unnoticed by *Theatre Australia*: Murray Nettleford's *The Travelling Rascals*, just completed a season at the Bondi Pavilion Theatre. Inspired by an incident as a country policeman in NSW in the 50s, this play has had a long and tortuous upbringing going back six years or more and involving a number of readings and workshops (including one at the art-faction Street Theatre) and a season in the 1974 National Playwrights Conference



*Richard Miles (The Captain) and Diana Parry-Jones (Laurie) in *The Father*.* Photo: Robert McFarlane

A lot of people have had a lot to say about that season over the years, but in fact it has got itself together under the direction of Max Cullen and has emerged as the silly should coincide in illness and anomalies of being. In commercial terms some of the language, I would suggest, is inappropriate for the kind of family entertainment for which the play is otherwise ideally suited (boring words and ideas are, after all, the prerogative of the subsidised *Victor* but this is insulation). I see no reason—and with the excellent cast—why it should not happily play the capitals or translate into a translocal play.

The Travelling Rascals is set in a country police-station passed over by a sergeant with an eye

for his own comfort. It is dimly lit, however, when a car that swerves from the station and The sergeant begins a cover-up campaign. Gullion plays the sergeant splendidly and is supported by John Hargraves as the young constable who gets his come-uppance. His thick accent makes him pretty well incomprehensible but he makes up for it in grizzled and fine hammy performances from John Clayton and Gordon Piper. Unlike *The Father* and *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *The Travelling Rascals* has no depths to be plumbed, but having come so far and arrived so late, I would be sorry if it went no further than Bondi on the way to the big event.

NIMROD THEATRE COMPANY

INNER VOICES

Rex Cramphorne

photo of *Inner Voices* by Louis Moceri. National Theatre Update, Sydney, New South Wales. General J.H. & T. Channer, from Tony Soprano, Michael Robert Poggetti, Lee Astor, Robert Aspinwall, Anna Pomorski, Barry Fox, Jane Harries, Michael Aspinwall, Garry Zuckerman. Scenery Peter Hill, Costumes

Inner Voices is a new Australian play that is not about Australia or Australians. It is set in Russia but it is not about Russians either. It is, wonderfully, a play which raises moral and philosophical questions from material that is specific enough to be a work of creative imagination, but general enough to allow the viewer if he wants to be of direct, contemporary, and broadly human relevance. If that makes the play surreal Harry and Abigail I hasten to add that it may also be vivid, theatrical and amusing enough to achieve popular appeal. *Inner Voices* takes us into the territory of Calderon's *Life is a Dream*, Prandelli's *Henry IV*, and Hendrik's *Kasper*. It is an ambitious step for a young writer, a step that few, in the Australian playwrighting renaissance of the 80's and 70's, have walked.

It is also, and for my money, a mix in the right direction.

I propose to list my impressions of *Inner Voices* to the audience and Hendrik plays not because I wish no consideration the manipulative value of the achievements, nor because I wish to suggest influence or derivation—I have no idea whether Leon Neuenhoven knows or cares for such plays—but rather because it will be useful to have examples of comparable material by which to assess the specific and individual artis of Mr Neuenhoven's play. For the purposes I am afraid I will have to venture into plot synopses, which I usually avoid.

In 1936 Calderon wrote one of the greatest plays of the Golden, or any other, Age—*La Vida es Sueño*. In it, his hero, Segismundo, has been kept off his inheritance in a tower, save for one concert, by his father Basilio, King of Poland, on account of prophecies which said his son would be an evil tyrant. When the boy has grown up Basilio begins to regret his decision and decides to give Segismundo a chance to prove himself. He has him drugged, brought to the police in his sleep, and, on awakening, has him informed that he is a prince, and heir to the throne. Enraged at the suspicion that he has been persecuted for years and eager to try his power, Segismundo is erratic, vengeful and hysterical. Basilio promptly drugs him and returns him to his tower. When he awakes he sees the experiences of being prince as a dream, vividly realising that it was the vanity of the material and social advantages that life can bestow. In the third act Segismundo is freed from the tower by mutinous soldiers, vanquishes his father in battle, thus becomes his own prince and abdicates and forgives Basilio, while pointing out to him that the method of inventing the past dictated him was wrong.

Hendrik's play first staged at Garrick in 1968 has little relation to the historical Kaspertausser. The poor Kasper does not share Bas's really is or really was with Kasper Haskas. It shows what is possible with satire. It shows how satire can be made to speak through stacking. The play could also be called *speech torture*. (Hendrik's notes)

dustry so the play). Hendrik's sense of 'unaccommodated men' seems ready to speak by unison: portraiture is diminished by the consensus of speech as a means of expression—a means of creating artificial uniformity to teach people to comprehend the world only in terms of the speech patterns they are given.

Jules Winnfield's shiny wife Segismundová/Kasper figure from an estimable personal point of view. Her aim (in terms of social/mental/corporate control) is another less accomplished Basilevský of Life is a Dream, nor is she elaborately developed, outshining of Kasper (Kasper is described as 'she' to what it is like to be Segismundová/Kasper and drops the point whilst he is beginning to come to an understanding of his position. The character is called Ivan VI, in a somewhat broadwheeling attitude to Russian history).

In the early stages we are shown an Ivan who has lived his twenty three years in isolation and silence in a glass box in which no one is allowed to speak to him. He is able to say only his own name. (It is a characteristic difference that he should be obsessed by his own intimacy while Hendrik's hero doubts only to become a person as other people are). His first, repeated phrase is 'I want to be someone like somebody else was ever'. A pair of cynical, self-sufficient guards plan to make their fortunes by releasing Ivan, proclaiming him king and crowning Catherine. Just as this was looking at their worst (on the road to St Petersburg with no listeners left and an 'idiot' king who can't be taught anything) an effervescent arrives to say that Catherine has died and that Ivan is now the rightful king. The fat guard Mirovich, powerfully built like Ivan, uses it to have the rewards for himself and, in a song which brings together the material of art and life with tail, face and economy, Mirovich teaches Ivan to say his second word—'Mirovich'—in response to the question 'who is your friend?'

The last scene shows Ivan rehearsing his coronation speech at the prompting of voice—the 'ours' voice which prompt and teach—and drowning himself.

All this continues the Jenkins on/Off scene which had already begun in our car. His climate cooler had clever extraction but it did little in relation to the heat, self-referential information given to him by Mirovich and the society—he is being taught the fake values of the world around him, thus the arm of life's pleasure, that pleasure is the only happiness, Ivan is given a dissolving lozenge with cells herself. Prince Ali is his tends. In preparation for the wedding night Mirovich teaches Ivan the 'arts of life'. When he fails to respond to Mirovich's initial instruction, Mirovich says, 'I know we should have given him someone to practice on' and Vladimir replies, 'I don't think it's a question of that. I think he just hasn't her.' (I don't) spoil the line to make any possible point—though it serves as an example of the light, pointed, and unusing style of the dialogue, especially in its context of the scene. The subtlety with which I say the play is good a lot, though there, perhaps, an reservation of points there at once turnout.)

Eventually Mirovich did an over-reacted. At the moment of his liberation Ivan has 'flashed' Ivan, kicking the blessed lady savagely, says 'look I'm talking now' and 'I'm listening'. In this key moment we start the action of Ivan's progression: freed of this 'teacher' he is able to speak for himself, even though it will be the assessment of what he has been taught. And in the same moment there is the beginning of a desire to leave for himself, even to evaluate what is heard. Unhappily, Mirovich's dying words warn us about the new guidance to the throne. Paul—



Tatyana Shchelina (Ivan) and Robert Poggetti (Mirovich)

Photo: Peter Holtzman

just unshaded (Or, fortunately, depending on whether you think it desirable that her consciousness is long or not.) Acting on his own behalf? Now, he surrounds himself with the people and voices he likes to hear—the cheerful, unassuming, "low-class" voices of a music-hall singer and her relatives. The种植的 and voices of Marwick's period are pastured and the problems of "present Paul" as lives with him, is ignored. In the final states his relations, hearing voices which are alternately truly other (unenhanced by the audience) and dismally past, in a situation which may be the last moments before Paul's entry arrives, or already back in peace after his arrival.

If the physical plotting is kept a little vague at the end of it because we are no longer outside (even observing Mr Hayes has led us to participate in their own state of mind). The state is an intellectual, moral, and even a geometrical space, nothing that has been perceived or learnt can be trusted, but in the very extremity of doubt from persons for science and, in it, says Tim Loxton—out of the chaos a consciousness is reaching out for self-knowledge.

In some of Cendrars' structures it is like among the many of the moments when Stepanenko has just re-assumed in person, before he can draw any conclusions about his experience, it is like the point at which Kasper begins, or the other hand, has reached the end of his play with no more than the beginning of an awareness of its problem.

Mr. Novak, under Cendrars, does not give us act three:

But then, of course, most of us prefer to live our lives within an act three, on the painful threshold of self-awareness, able to satisfy well and dash, but suddenly summoned to check what are generally only comprehensible by reference to other people's systems of thought. If I seem to be reminding (not my ever-persuasiveness) the play is that the play is of a kind which invites such ramblings.

Mr. Novak has written in a moderate, almost with very little concession to historical verisimilitude. Such details of Russia, 1905, as are given are, as have indicated, of a frivolous and jolting kind although, equally, the material is treated seriously and there is no sense of historical burlesque or send-up. In short, the dialogue takes a very fine line. From time to time I found myself thinking of it as a synthesised expression rather than a fine line, but if the elements in a carefully measured historical re-enactment. I can only conclude that from the gaves of one of a peasant audience, Mr. Novak has probably made that right choice.

I have had such mixed about the production John Bell's because it seems to me to be a severe study in excess of the text, with admirable perfunctoriness from the whole cast. Tony Sheldon's Tim is a strong centre to the play and it is certainly a role in which an actor can take great delight. Jane Hardin, the only woman in the cast, is persistently well in *Princess Alice* and the musical-singer, Baby Face. Presentation of the play in the Government space gives a big plus at the area of spaciousness to the performances, but a slight minus in the lack of variation in the tone of voices. If, in particular, the dialogue scenes can together a little where louder and more complex lighting and the use of a few dozen of setting and traps in a larger area could have helped to keep them more distinct from one another. It is in this way, if any, that the play will not appeal to general audiences—some will be readily accepted at a narrative level but the longer and more complex act two may leave them what makes a surprised up to that level attitude unsatisfied.

PAUL ELLIOTT AND THE AUSTRALIAN ELIZABETHAN THEATRE TRUST

THE TWO OF US

Norman Kessel

The Two of Us by William Price. Theatre Royal, Sydney. R. W. Johnson (15-27) Director. Paul Lee Designer. Tony Peacock. SHEILA HANCOCK, JOHN THAYER DAVID NEWMAN. VALERIE BRAITHWAITE

New faces in old shows is a common theatrical phenomenon in Australia. This production at the Theatre Royal, Sydney, of Sheila Hancock and John Thayer in *The Two of Us*, has been followed by Douglas Fairbank Jr., David Lennox and Stanley Holloway in *The Merchant of Venice*. Laser will go to have American Slimmer James Stewart—would you believe?—Wally!

One fellow who has observed what a pity it was not not seeing these interesting overseas players in lesser works (this isn't that, like, it is without its hazards) returning the disrespectful Peter O'Toole series in *Dead End* (Dicks) and the fastidious Karen Lynn Gutz, *The Alfred Hitchcock Story*.

The talented British husband and wife team brought over for Sydney and Melbourne versions of *The Two of Us* (not known to Australians only per medium of the screen and the issue—Sheila Hancock through TV's *Alleged Trade* and many films, and John Thayer who had most memorably as star of the now telecasting movie *The Sweeney*).

The play they are in first saw here in 1972. Many theatregoers will remember the Marston St. Theatre production with Anne Heddy and Max Melchers which was so successful it was immediately considered for an equally successful run at the Independent Theatre—North Shore (that's "first," unlikely ever to be repeated).

This new version it produced by Paul Elliott and Richard Jay in association with the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust and Paybill (Australian Pty Ltd) and by arrangement with the M.L.C. Centre Management—a clever example of the cooperative concept necessitated by the economic structure in theatre today.

Anxiously, *The Two of Us* a new a innocent, lessened Action Equity has understandably insisted on an equal number of Australians being in the cast, thus making it *The Four of Us*. This has however not upset the balance of the show, while the robust virtuous that was an essential element of Michael Frayn's tourney of confections has been firmly upheld. And considerably less significantly, the production was only half successful—on opening night in Sydney—answers to the first play, *Black And Silver*, must

Hancock and Thayer play a couple whose return to Manila to try to repossess the remains of their inheritance is constantly thwarted by the dying of their baby. All the pathos humanity and hence of the situation has somehow vanished under Patrick Lee's direction and the dramatic details dissolved become merely crude rather than

In *The New Guests*, Valerie Pratt plays a mature woman who in an Elizabethan house at a party she didn't invite has picked up a brawny young man and allowed him to sleep her bed. Thus encouraged, he proceeds to move into her cottage, complete with his need dirty washing, and she begins on getting rid of him only by explicating his curious philosophy of reverse truth. There is an exuberant and resourceful side to the project tremendous energy into this role, but there is no way, notwithstanding a blinding wig, that he can present himself as a steady sleep-in 20 or so.

The show's own successful half were after intermission, first in PM. Paul, with Miss Hancock giving a splendidly amiable, yet strongly levelling portrayal of a sensitive woman, a diligent woman totally repelled by maddeningly boorish air of superiority assumed by her husband, played by David Nathaniel. Almost her only source of communication with him is the fact, the inevitable uncontrollable twitching of which is usually her sole guide to his thoughts.

Price does streaks, however, at the final play, *Chinaman*, with Miss Hancock and Thayer together again as a married couple trying to cope with an unwanted guest at a dinner party. With ingenuous staging, minuscule tuning and many quick changes, between them there play all five visible roles in the well-directed, fast-moving little comedy. They play both the host and the unwanted guest, with Miss Hancock as the host, the know-how guest a courageous wife and, finally of all, the wife's new Happy boyfriend.

Terry Perera's wretched son and Andraszka Waite Brown's cultured art director ends



Sheila Hancock & John Thayer in Chinaman

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CANBERRA REPERTORY SOCIETY AT THEATRE THREE

A TOAST TO MELBA

Roger Purkers

A TOAST TO MELBA by Jack Hibberd. Canberra Repertory Society at Theatre Three, 1977. Director: Ross McGregor. Design: Paul Tread. Designer: Alan McRae. Opened 17/3/77.

CHARMING RAISES TO MELBA. MISS MARGARET DE MELBA. RALPH COLEBROOK, BRIAN COTTER, FRANK PENNISI, ARTHUR DALFORD, JOHN RICHARDSON, PAUL CRAVEN, JANE SMITH, HORN TRUST, MICHAEL WILKINSON.

This is Australian year at Canberra. Miss Melba, Cecilia, an Australian version of *Three Sirens*, and *How Does Your Garden Grow*. It is surely about time that Ross got around to this prepossessing. Up to this year they had greatly improved the attendance and emanation of their plays, the rising level of production in every way had begun to shine, only the prepossessing had still elusively had the shadow of yesterday. Now we're in for some long awaited treat.

Especially I read the raves that Ross McGregor struck. The production seemed like a very smoothly balanced combination, grass and up, and Cecilia skipstick. The art was simple and elegant, in art deco blinds and blocks. This seemed so easy to look at backdrop for the Harlequinade and superbly chosen costumes. Melba's dresses, for instance, were quite fantastical. This is important, not only for the suggestion of opulence, but for the pathetic contrast with the block of old age.

The first half of act one was too slow, and one could see the first eight butterflies tolling in the air. This kind of parasite, full of snails and thundersaws, needs bairniness. Threes picked up immediately and the later scenes between Melba and Our Glad, and Melba and Lucy de Gres come off without question.

Mrs Hassel's Nellie was quite different from Evelyn Kraepel's, at least judging from the Adelaidian performance which I saw. Evelyn Kraepel had that incredible energy and sense of spirit to create a childhood Nellie who bravely turns into the rough streetwise Nellie on *Lorraine House* wasn't successful in creating the child Nellie—she wasn't striking out for lower lip at the world.

But she seemed to grow into the part, until, at the end, we had a character with pathos and depth in our hands (and I don't believe this is what Jack Hibberd is aiming at just at the very end).

The supporting actors in plays may be that day's great strength. Perhaps the Public Service is the barrier of experience and, alas, I don't know. And in a play of cartoon characters and portentous amorphosis, all taking credit for the success of another person, what farce place to draw on than the nation's capital?

And this goes for all of them again! Michael Wilson was quite wonderful as Cecilia. These

Holmes super-stern-popped acidity due to different soils from Carlton to Flemington, and Michael Wilson played Cecilia with such comic gusto as to do right by the original intention.

Margaret de Melba has the voice and stage deportment for Lady de Gres, and the tissues of the women in her dressing room are attributable to her control over the space. Her Shirley Hollins was excellent. Perhaps it was John Hollands, however, who stole the show. Like I said that she out-enactuated Melba—Ms Richards trained at the Melba Conservatorium—gave the second act a tone of unexpected bathos which at the time I believe the play strives to create. As Madame Marchiony, too, she acted with verve



Michael Wilson as Cecilia Cecchi

broadened and, again, upstaged Melba, but this is what was being aimed for. In that case, Ross McGregor knows when to exploit the character of Melba and when to let her exploit herself.

I wish, however, that Jack Hibberd had written the play in a certain place, much like the *La Bohème* Show which is the play like him that most resembles Melba in concept and attitude. Melba is a series of mirthless images and very clever punny lines. Some of it is slow and unworkable, but some scenes are hourly effective, like the bizarre songs of Melba's estate, full of absurd Guerrillero and outside perspectives. The glorious sparkiness of Melba is there, at the toughness and color. I might guess that there's more than a little Mae West in Jack Hibberd's Melba and who could regret that? Myth making—the art of exploiting the hero or heroine for personal or national gain—is the theme and it takes no explanation. Most of the effects are good and they bring it out. But in the end there is a bit from about the page and it won't go away. The play is mostly on the surface and that's fine. So is *Sorrell Young Life*. These are preludial passes and shouldn't be offended for the lack of subtlety. Speaking like naturalized devices in plays which incorporate nationalism is just holding Australian drama down by the sweater legs. Jack Hibberd's set is all over this play. But that excess philosophical whimsy of Noyes in *Streets* must be allowed.



Louise Hassel as Nellie

QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY

FOR YEARS I COULDN'T WEAR MY BLACK

Don Batchelor

FOR YEARS I COULDN'T WEAR MY BLACK by Anthony Shaffer. S.O. D. Shaffner. QTC Production. Imperial S.O.T.T. Director: Tom Garrison. Stage Manager: Bruce Collier. ELAINE LEE: Cleo Fisher. ROBERT QUINN: Dan Russell. GORDON HODGE: Alan Pratt. MOTT: Bruce Parris. NANCY: Russell Reinhardt. JIM: WARREN WOODHAM. Engineer: RON DAYNE.

The tenebrous mood of Anthony Shaffer has returned to a polished version in *For Years I Couldn't Wear My Black*. It's a three act thriller and when the cast tries to trust the play instead of pushing when they find a sufficient level of performance which can control audience and melodrama, the world premiere producible by the Q.T.C. will do some justice to the text.

On opening night, it was by no means a finished product, either on paper or in performance. Bits of this will no doubt be removed so that subsequent performances need invent something else than three hours five minutes of their lives in it, and there should be a re-enactment of Act Two, to explore well-being with drive. But the frame of the piece is so sound that there is no doubt it's a year.

Even in this roughcast form, you can see what a little diamond it is. When it's polished, the hard edge and many facets should sparkle anti-theatrically. For some people this will be pleasure enough, but the piecemeal give-off may be rewarding reflections.

The situation is that Fle Collier is opening

her house-middle-class home and heart to a TV crew filming an advertisement for the winter dandruff-cream "Follyfloss". The routine day of filming is interrupted by a set of oil-burner losses' notifications that have the sole refined world of the crew needs cut. In the end, not even the most severe of them can dampen the crust when he sees and touches it. The twists and turns of the plot are numerous, and each one reveals some new and horrifying dimension in the real life of what the advertising agency had chosen as a nice little slice of life. We hear the explosive effect of paraded and sterile authority's name on two adolescents whose alternative is the per-picked commercial principle buried down from the origins of advertising.

Not just Shaffer's view of the advertising world is without humour or compassion. The characters he creates are well observed, types from his own experience of the "world". The most developed one is Cock Richards, the film director, who limits the life spark inside him and where every utterance drops with the very cynicism of a defeated and He is a perfect example of the human weariness of depression and empty philosophies.

As measured for the director, the film-time has a lot to offer, and a play like *The Changeling* has demonstrated just what the major value of professional work can really be. In the early stages, Joe McCollum realized this with some fascinatingly detailed work in the film crew as an acquaintance. But the uninvolved, factoided and raw edges of the actors lurking on the edge of scenes like so many ghosts. Worse damage was done by the reduction of a scene-changer leader in the crew. The initial sense of judgment was Shaffer's, but the directionless actor (Bruce Parris) compounded it with a lot of pretentious histrionics that scored when laughs at the expense of the usual preparations to arrive in the can up to any situation, and at the loss of humour that builds from chapter to chapter in such film sequences.

In general, the worst feature of the acting was a tendency towards stereotypicality in an attempt to point the humour of the lines. Australian actors, lacking the British vocal tactique of their English counterparts would be well advised not to ape some half-appreciated style, but to demonstrate all the essence of the characters. The art of the lines does not survive much heavy abstraction.

This was certainly not a fault in Elaine Lee's Fle Collier, a slyly resourceful, mean-minded but plausibly sympathetic. No more surtitles, but properly integrated, will perhaps a touch of unnecessary cynicism on the opening scenes.

In blocking, Tom Garrison and Laurel Butler in the Hargreave Collars, Joe McCollum did superlatively well. They created a visual interest that was chilling.

A box-set offers little joy to the designer James Redwood, and in the S.O.T.T. Theatre, where there is no definite proscenium, the strong frame necessary to draw us into the illusion is missing. Further damage is done by the separation that results from separating upstage in search of a line for a curtain-drop. The theatre cannot, however, be blamed for these off-white walls in the set which is fixed stage-state under the additional film lights.

The consideration of staging leads me to the thought that the play may well translate better to the screen where focus on sustained action will be easier, intensity will be enhanced and atmospheric effects are more possible. In this event, it will make a worthy and intriguing successor to *Death*—provided they can find a more effective name.



Elaine Lee, Bruce Parris and Tom Garrison

Photo—Q.T.C.

LA SCÈNE THEATRE

BULLSHOT CRUMMOND

CAMERATA THEATRE

TOM

Richard Fetheringham

Bullshot Crummond by Meares House; Directed by La Salle Theatre President Dolfi; Presented by DOLF DOLFI, RAY WILSON, ROBERT COOPER and ERROL O'NEILL; Rosemary Peters, PENNY WINTER, DICK VAN PUFFEN, STUART MATTHEWS, LUCILLE BROWN, BARBARA EDDISON, DENNIS RICHARD MICHAEL.

Tom by Alan Blue (Cameras: Flemming); Directed by Dolfi; Present: Dennis Wilson, Tom COOPER, SUZANNE KATH, RICHARD KEN FIELD, GORDON COOPER, DAVID STEPHEN, DENNY RALSTON, ANGELA DIANA PRYCE.

Are you going to the theatre last, and interesting it isn't? I certainly am. This last month I've managed to visit most of the blandishments offered by theatre, and gone to some movies instead. And having done so, I'm beginning to understand why I can so often find myself given the same freebie ticket to

I don't want to get into one of these living presence vs. reflected image arguments, except to quote that the point for the living presence don't apply to the obviously health and reason of most modern theatre. But both the plays I've seen this week raise other questions to me: for both seemed to be achieving their aims as well in an artless theatrical sense, and lie distinctly second rank to a more dramatic companion.

Bullshot Crummond at LaSalle is a enormous "real" soap on Bullock Crummond, the very British hero of the Supermen revolt, with a million quid. Han, his links missing, a vast young thing and a fifth actor playing a doctor professor, a writer, a bunchhead in the dangerous air. It's advertised as a riotous parody of 1930s B Grade movies. I know nothing about the authors, Meares, House, Wilton, Neville-Andrews, Shearman, and Cunningham, except that they also wrote *It's Always Cock Dent*. I'll have a dollar each way however that as there's 5 of them and 5 acting roles, it's one of those actor-improvised shows.

The play uses the limitations of live actors to advantage, and at one point rises to a very funny little scene where somebody forces the actor playing the villain to do double as American gangster he's hired. At the end of the scene he kills himself and dies and lives to play. And in a spoof it has its moments. There are banter in jokes to be derived in, an option to take that down, stacks of dynamite, force fields ... There are some single reversals, and some of the lighting and production tricks had the audience clapping. It'll keep the tourists clicking until 9pm until the *Three Dimensional Play* comes, for those short-sighted tourists.

There are also short success realism for involving it. It's barely an hour long, couldn't be

longer without threatening to become tedious, a short plain silly, and it is evocative that you're left with the thought "Why bother?" unless you're across the foyer homeward bound. The best line in the play is so banal it's like silly the only one with any bite to it at all ("Good God," says Bullock, thinking the same young thing has been rescued while his book was turned), "and I was going to offer to marry her too!" A slightly short reason for not going is that also in town is a good script on a similar theme—Neil Simon's *One Day at a Time*, a great director, shiny western—the film *Martin By Death*. If it's thrill, inconsequence and laughs you're seeking, then you're not interested in choice and most will choose the film.

Alexander Head's *Tom*, at a new small Brabourne (where Camerata), was certainly not evocative. The theater is the frump of the embassies of a university drama group driven offcourse by exuberant rentals, and it is a fine 60 seat private playhouse made by knocking the partition out and putting between two rooms one house in the inner rectangle. The production had all the dynamic infectious energy of untrained dedicated amateurs. The play is set in Sydney, and pings with the lower consciousness of an oil company and their wives. The wives seemed unable to cope with the dialogue of Guru's Rebusas and basically pretentious entertainments and chose to deliver the lines with much energy and little gravity or subtlety.

This made what's probably an overenthusiastic play anyway a suitable dosage of words. The second act, where the plot evades us last and the focus on the central character of Susan becomes clarity, was better written and better acted, and sent me home thinking Camerata all

the best but without any real enjoyment. Compared to say Jules Fetheringham for the film *Carrie's Knowledge*, Buzz's observations on the potentialities and actual results of certain middle class source are somewhat mundane, and the Australianness of his characters often but more of the exaggerations of Barry Humphries than of anyone I know.

Film, it occurs to me, might well be Mr. Buzz's medium. A good director would red pencil the verbiage, and the editor would obviate the need for the sometimes awkward way Buzz keeps all the scenes within one living room set. The major criticism of *Tom* when it first appeared was that the play straddled two genres unconvincingly—domestic drama and broad farce. The problem basically is that Buzz was a lot of the "well the audience catch the fever or the vote the money" business, with his usually opening and closing doors in the best Feydeau tradition, and he still expects us to maintain a belief that these characters are still actual inhabiting people who for some reason climb through windows, stand stiffly, and are always surprised what their spouses walk into their own homes. All the characters are diminished by the extent to which we're asked to suspend disbelief, and in the eye of *Susan* this diminishes a very fine character study indeed.

Again the constitutes of fun would be handed to the actors. In the old days cutting was reserved for continuous time and action, with fallen robes and wigs used to denote the passing of time or the shifting of a scene. Nowadays it's cut, cut, cut, — and we seem to accept it readily enough. In the recently released David Copperfield we even see an impressive cut from David Bowie's Linus Hepp's office in fact to David Hallyday clothes (severely sucking his breakfast) at home the next morning. These are clearly defined actions and consequences of the scene, but just keep yankin' to serve Mr. Buzz's ends.

So there you are. Occasionally I shall resort to look at the other media and see what they're up to. G'day, keep swimming! Phil— I have a confession to make. I'm only going by word of mouth that *Mister by Death* leaves Bullock Crummond hot dead— you see, I haven't seen it or *Silent Movie*, or *King Kong*. All my friends have seen them, so I suppose if they were being otherwise enterprising the night I attended them (in seats 101) they've learnt from past mistake since those plays are part and no radios play-offs of B Grade movies. They're also going to the *Honey* line, and improving. I never imagined



Errol O'Neill (Bullshot) & Penny Winter (Rosemary) in Bullshot Crummond

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING GROUP

THE HILLS FAMILY SHOW

ADELAIDE THEATRE GROUP

REVENGE

Vic Marsh

HILLS FAMILY George opened and presented by the Australian Performing Group—Theatre Royal, Victoria Theatre, Adelaide, S.A. (except Sat. 25, 27) February 24-March 12. **CHIEF CREW** JOHN BRONSON, RONALD PEARCE, MAX GOLDSTEIN, GUY TURNER, EVERETT KRAUT, MAX GOLDSTEIN, BILL GARNER, TONY TAYLOR, LORNA FRASER.

REVENGE by Howard Branton. Adelaide Theatre Group. Manager: Theatre Maskers Inc., 10th Adelaide 2 2 77. 18 to 22. Directed by John Dakin. Designed by Mervin Dicks. Music by Alan Parker. Set by Michael Pearce. Costumes by Helen Goss. Production Stage Manager: Sue Burtt. Set and Prop Master: Bert Jim Holt. Sung: DAVID REED, P.J. McKEE, ROBIN COOPER, JANE COOPER, MICHAEL COOPER, CLIFFORD MACLEISH, VIVIANNE BAKER. Stage: David C. Cox. Technical Director: Margaret Perriss.

Sometimes asked if I like Family Show well, in fact, a "Family Show"—and I had to answer yes. Every now and then at the Fringe Factory, the Group puts together a show without a writer and their audience includes them as they look up their collective noses. Hill's reminds me of nothing quite so much in the traditional yearly comic—performed by different theatrical troupe for perhaps different reasons.

The Show was originally built around the talents of a particular team of perils here, well known to their estimable audience in Melbourne, and it originated, interestingly, as a string of acrobatic flops, cap disaster, pianist chosen, mind reader, fire jugglers, no fire-breather notwithstanding the slight sense of final interaction, the structure remains very loose—it's

left well all the time, unfocused, meandered in nature of an improvisation. It's left largely to Max Goldstein to string us along with silly audience games—he's a master of the gentle elbow-in-the-rib, all-joking participation.

Hung around a vindictive family, The Show provides these performers with several settings for their peculiarly cocoonlike comedy—sleek jazz about imbecile impressiveness absurd—and they tread a fine line. You always feel unsure of an actor looks or through he doesn't really know what he's doing—so the best of them make fine play of that tension, building you up with expectation and then a usually quiet solo tape. But I wished that Ray McKeever could actually finish a line of that persistence from Antigone's Hayday in the rap routines, and I was uncomfortable as hell when Gertie Farine (Helen Krapel) worked her who.

On the other hand, Jack Warner's piano pestle was very witty when needed precisely because he could play the piano (and play around with it), and the marvelous Max Gaffey (showstopper—one life another level up morally altogether in his terrible intentness at ventriloquy). His talk starts to get out of hand, reverberating on his parent inability to talk without moving his face, plunging Farine into a developmental crisis of confidence, son Windsor leaps into the breach, as Taylor drops into an ascendit door, and the whole situation crosses the borderline into madness, taking us far away from any sympathetic "can he do it, or can't he?" question. George's dangerous one no more lying around the path impeded I.

This is where McI really comes together—Gaffey's characteristics of the steady, rhythmic patter come together in a pitchy dignity through anything he does. Then Taylor's elegant sermons, in Winston, blossoms in a reverberant as the liquid-harpooned project, totally ethereal in the ukulele lullabies of his own vibrato, he loses the audience altogether, and Farine stays the show at the piano (this family club each other in the keep-a-thumping shenanigans).

When you have performers alone to work at out, you get all the strengths and weaknesses of performance theatre—the content and the shape often need more than just prancing off it's like having lots of marvelous words and no nice voices or perspectives. The A.P.G. collection still finds directing and writing a little unadventurous, but they are skills basic to the theatre anyway and ones they are discovering the necessity for. As performers they situated and shaped the way would express, rightening it up in rhythm and dropping the show guys (but a writer gives you an evenness, a statement—not always for the intellect). A.P.G. garage shows come out in you in an exasperated confrontation, but it used to feel let down afterwards—a little coaxed, in fact—charmingly, with weird energy and thundershells and weedy an articulation,

nationalized aesthetic of what they're doing, but no inventiveness in the heart.

Howard Branton's *Revenge* is a caustic comedy about the ambivalence of mixed and mad in the human psyche, and he sketches it out with characters from the East End underworld picked against aristocratic London police.

The cause of the play is the hatred and revenge stemming from a strong ambivalence between anti-socialist Adams Hepple, son of a Red-tower (or lower) wall, and the first constable who ever visited him—Assistant Commissioner MacLeish. MacLeish has risen in the flesh of the whale that Hepple had gone down hill, Adam loses all impulse to perfect a killing crime and dreams only of revenge, even forgoing an off-side who shamed him in a sale and topped off the case, just to get a gang together for love enough to just do revenge. MacLeish's star can't incite no record, when in the aftermath the darkness he is drawn up to houses and poor Hepple continues downwards into the pale of hell.

A bit of a modern morality play, then; but Branton is no conventional moralist—he has brought the two souls together and Underlined his point by having the same actor play out both characters. Adam Hepple is unassured by pure heart, and MacLeish, the Son, is motivated by atheist religion, plotting his way indolently with the effect. But both men are ambivalent by aggression and both harbors about the plan of Al Capone. To Branton, life is a grim business, best depicted in a style which used to be called, aptly enough, pallid. Realism, nihilism and depression are a commonplace, but, simultaneously and a sort of consequence, are all strands of the cultural fabric we're wrapped in. He country-paints the masses with oil copper and ochre with a one-dimensional, loosely unmeant or absent sense on the rim, contrasted with a big jerky move cuts and purples hawkweed, no birth crone and coaper the country ass an environment, for the capers it's the risk of rheumatism while waiting in the hedgerows, while for Hepple, the names, while he's experienced to agriculture it's a rite.

This is a sum-peored production by John Dakin, lean and economical and communicated in just the way Branton requires. He is well served by Frank Colletta, who does exceedingly well in the dual role, and the rest of the good cast contributes a well focused acting for its brittleness. Colletta is a doltish—with splendid attack and simple, clear strokes of character satire, he displays an uncanny ear for the exact ambivalence at the heart of Branton's characters. The opening night performance only seemed to take out its cloak a little more to find the right pace, and to give its audience a little more time to savor Branton's originality.

Revenge finds itself in simple staging, and I particularly admired John Dakin's simple sound effects—from the tapped speaking session which evoked the peace mission to the short burst of rhythmic gunfire—it was simple and to the point. The Sheldene's lighting is none too flexible—found it hard to handle some plotting of moves and changes of scene to lighting changes, and a flashing peacock light in the report Act I was weak, where it should have been striking. On the other hand, an instantaneous flash of strobe at a set piece and the simple effect of a forehead sequence were effective.

Howard Branton knows his theatre and uses its techniques very simply to serve his dramatic ideas, John Dakin with able support from many of the (Sheridan, a to be commended for playing it straight, doing neither the talk, and letting the play speak.



The characters of The Hills Family Show

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN THEATRE COMPANY

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL

Michael Morley

THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL by R.B. Sheridan. The Playhouse, Adelaide. South Australian Council \$10.27. By Peter Trosin, directed by John Surtees. KENNY ADAMS, Sir Anthony Baskerville; ALICE ANDREE, Constance HODGEKINSON; JEREMY COOPER, RICHARD DAWKINS; ROBERT FARNHAM, Joseph; ROBIN HOOD, JAMES HILL; HELEN HOPKINS, LEAHY CHURCH; MIKE LEAKE, PATRICK FROST, Mrs. M'DEARY; CHRISTINE DEE, Mrs. M'DEARY; MICHAEL FLETCHER, Mr. M'DEARY; JOHN GLEESON, DAVID GAUTIER; WILLIAM MICHAEL GIBBONS, Mrs. M'DEARY; NANCY HARRIS, Mrs. M'DEARY; ROBERT HEDDERSON, Mr. M'DEARY; RUSSELL MICHELLE STAYMER.

In the past it has often seemed that the main problem confronting a director using the Playhouse is that of keeping the production in a periodical way which, for all its obvious advantages, can seem curiously attractive and even tame. For the production of *The School for Scandal*, Colin George has splendidly avoided this trap by inventing at the same time pursuing the players will down on the thrust surface, where they are separated from the carnivorous, expressive bared by a semi-circular colonnade of arches topped with metallic bollards. However, it is not failing to utilize critical to note that, at the same time as using only half the stage, his production really gives only half Sheridan's plot.

That said, there is much to commend in his production. It has a good sense of style. No mean achievement, on first showing, for the simple and displays, like the most part, careful observance of the shape of the audience without allowing the actors to become mannerisms involving an endless series of poised pyramids. These virtues are particularly evident in the sequences involving the first interval and a repeat in the production's favour, as the introspective sequence and background lighting here are easily become tiresome. The difficulties of the exposition were recognized, after all, at the first performance by the plain Robert Murray, who announced, over Sheridan himself, by remarking at the close of the second act: "Even the dramatic person would leave off talking and let the play begin." The voices of Lucy Sheridan's and the Trustees were well spaced and rhythmically interlocked. But they also served to show up the by-sequences, seemingly under-rehearsed and banal scenes that the interval.

The scenes depicting Charles and his compatriots caressing and settling off his Frenchy portmanteau should go with snap and vivacity; they are riding on a broad light on two stools. But the production staged flatly and was not helped by some banal and wantonly banal acting and slavish attempts at atmosphere an atmosphere of merriment and cheerful levity. Unfortunately, this sluggishness also carried over into the scenes, so much so that the fatal disclosure of Lucy Teasle to her husband had the usual disconcerture of Joseph left half intact and incomplete. Furthermore, some plenty bits of business should have been

remedied or dispensed with: the attempt to have Lady Teasle's parasol would not have deserved a more curiously monkish and short-sighted than Sir Peter. And when the latter advances on the screen and supposedly catches a glimpse of the French maid's petticoats, he seemed, from where I was sitting, to move fast to face with a knife surprised Lady Teasle who had absurdly instructed his child of seven.

The comedy of the second act had recovered somewhat, but the damage had already been done. And the play's conclusion, which sought to juxtapose both an up-beat and down-beat ending, seemed unsatisfactory. Far better for Colin George to have open family in favour of the dissident. His closing tableau of characters processing off in the half-light round the back of the arched colonnade, with Slink following their progress with pencil and notebook pen, is an informative, witty and restrained cod and does not need the support of the preceding act closing.

Overall, the production was better than the individual performances. It had humour, sparkle and no lack of colourful and striking costumes though, as usual, the S.A.T.C. design department preferred overstatement, no suggestion here so Ronald Fall, in the role of Joseph, his less quite the most vivid and attention-performing of the ensemble, though his costume was surely too gaudy for the character. With his face constantly assuming a three-quarter mark of forced amazement and the constant alternating between ostentatious obsequiousness and superiority, he made

Joséph's hyperactivity both oddly engaging and repellent. As the ostensibly more dignified and refined Charles, Dennis Oates was sadly miscast. He began in overdrive, parading his lines like a patter song and looked for most of the running like a rather natty underplot's master. Hard to imagine that Charles enjoying any physical pleasure, too bland to provide any sensations the audience easily have about his character, and too remote to perceive its subtlety.

On the other hand, Brian James' Sir Peter deserved to see many more scenes (more paragraphs) to engage the audience's attention. This was a stock old-man comic, and yet Sir Peter is the least obviously comic character on the play. He must fit into the yardstick-maintain somewhat predominant of the others' behaviour, and where the part calls for restraint, bitterness and even a degree of pathos, we were given a rather jocular master. Hard to imagine that Sir Peter attracting Lady Teasle, who, in the person of Dorothy Vernon, is certainly a dramatic waste. Beneficial, pleasant and fashionable. If he approached the role with a rather different sense of the country town (which is what did Faulkner do in the recent T.V. version), the renewables offered as especially vigorous reading at the part.

Otherwise, the women were a collection of ovarian eggs. Ruth Cracknell was splendidly as Mrs. Candover, but tended afterwards to lope around the stage to not much apparent purpose. And Cynthia Grey's Lady Batterwill, though much better than her last year's roles, suffered too little, while still requiring too much in supporting roles. Leslie Dwyer and Greg Ashurst stood out, a special word for Leslie Hodgeson as Gracious. The part is a caricature and an open invitation to hamming and hogging. But Mrs. Astor, as usual, avoided the easy short cuts and gave a little glow of a performance, quiet and subtle in intention as physical and vocal ones.

Colin George's production is a promising beginning to his twin addictions: it may lack the depth and bite that lie in the heart of Sheridan's comedy of manners, but it certainly catches the lightness and humour that the recent T.V. production seemed deliberately to eschew. Its one serious weakness, on first viewing, seems to be its lack of stasis and pest, but the season's run may well rectify this.



The cast of the S.A.T.C.'s 'School for Scandal'

HOLE IN THE WALL THEATRE

HAPPY END

Margot Luke

HAPPY END by Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht, music by Kurt Weill, lyrics by Bertolt Brecht, John Miles, designer Bill Oberholser (3 hrs 30 mins). Director: John Miles. Design: Bill Oberholser. Set: Bill Oberholser. Costumes: Bill Oberholser. Lighting: Bill Oberholser. Stage Manager: Bill Oberholser. Stagehands: Dennis Ferguson, Bill Oberholser. Stage Manager: Dennis Ferguson. Stagehands: Dennis Ferguson. Cast: Bill Oberholser, Robert van Maacken, Bill Peacock, Dennis Ferguson, John Miles, David Taylor, Bill Oberholser, Roland Payne, Linda Gaskins, Michael Peacock, Dennis Ferguson, Michael Peacock, Michael Johnson, Stephen Edwards, stage manager: Dennis Ferguson.

The drama offerings (four out of eight) at the Festival of Perth this year are strong on Words with Music. Brecht and Weill's *Happy End* at the Hole in the Wall and a rock version of A Midsummer Night's Dream at the Hayman. These have the other aspect in common: both combine to adjust a more or less successful blending of professional and amateur talent. And there the similarity ends. *Happy End* is produced on a spacious while The Dream has the backup facilities of a large and clearly genial amateurish production. Both show schemes which they have set out to do: to entertain festival audiences with a consistently degree of originality. *Happy End*, with its special limitations, with its amateurish actors and largely incompetent playwrights, has a spark of admiration inherently reserved for game little builders. The Dream, on the other hand, created with confidence, comes over as a vulgar pose of originality. Funnyman, immortalise us too, or least the first half. But there's something more to it: more about production values which translated director David Adderley back into the

area of left camp. John Miles on the other hand, turned into more realistic artistic budgeting at the Hole in the Wall has succeeded in emphasising the inaccuracy of the play. The two productions, then, in their juxtaposition, make a clear point about the relationship between efficiency and decadence.

Happy End is a little-known work by the Brecht and Weill team, put together to follow up the enormous success of The Threepenny Opera in 1928. (More German refugee looks fail to fit it.) It is an early Guy and Dolls story of gang warfare and the loss of a Salvation Army lass for one of the gangsters. The setting is Chicago—Bill's Hole, Hell and Caney Street Mission (with an absurdly incongruous act by Bill Driedt adapting so vast world). The Brechtian dialectic alternates hours as the pillars of shadow behind the social comedy. Mirth and suffering are treated as lightly as religion—but both provide raw material for comedy. The shattered victim makes a miraculously recoverable sermonising, is dubiously satisfied, happiness and beauty are hopefully united.

The professional actors reveal in the upper reaches for character-playing. Robert van Maacken's cynical Japanese will to live wills as he is smitten, and reaches a highlight of absurdity singing a sailor's song whilst simultaneously clotheering a hapless gangster. Helen Haugh's deathly as a dim-witted barmaid who loves her selves, and as the powerful Lady in Grey who maintains the gang according to a series of ineffective disputes, like pieces once again that she is an actress with a considerable gift for comedy without ever losing an instinctive legancy of movement.

The non-professionals are finely integrated, largely thanks to the lively yet disciplined choreography by Barry Scragg, which welds them together, the irremovable work remaining an untempered individual characteristic.

The most glaringly weak element is the singing. The often discordant music and partly-sung might suggest that real singing ability may be dispensed with, but of course it can't. Only one of the minor characters, played by Stephen Edwards shows real singing ability and here again the issue, of the West obviously fails.

Many Hens, as Hellhounds, the terrible, lines impulsive military lyrics to the part, but is not completely at home with the music. His natural gift is for the gassy lyrical (as she

showed in *A Town to Metal*), whereas here, in emphasising the vocal register rather than the dramatic of Lili demands she is singing against the grain.

What makes the production a success is a sense of style that recognises the limitations to be overcome and compensating as far as possible by constituents again the elements freely available to the company: humour, timing, movements and a versatility in creating quirky-kitsch characters parts.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a very different proposition. Director David Adderley once was inspired by a year's work with the Royal Shakespeare Company under Peter Brook to present an annual unconventional Shakespeare production. Over the years his approach has qualified between using the actors to enhance on their star the originalism the one hand, and on the other hand to provide a stylised for a editorial. There is no necessarily serious presentation. In the present situation the gods are major role for sex magic: these must be believed. (The tradition of the three witches or the seven fauns, or some like that making a basic mechanism by which the creative imagination of old, pastored itself against unbroken stale mediocrity.)

The production never claims that the setting represents a circuit, because the play is about fantastical happenings and therefore justifies the setting. In fact, however, the entire atmosphere all but disappears in the walls of other effects. True, there is some sort of lighting reflecting up to coloured lights, but the true spirit of the show is somewhere between a gay night-club and Crowley, with a generous infusion of rock opera. This makes a good viewing, but for many audience audience.

The comic element throughout functions on various levels of the emotional malice among the fair folk and a heightened sexual responsiveness of the Lili. Above all play for the Athenian lovers. The songs are rendered in whimsical styles of rock from the fifths to the sixties. In fact, the production succeeds in accommodating nearly every shade of musical pop culture in a lively and refreshingly cheeky manner. The effects and costumes designed by Peter Parkinson, the lights flares and swirls and the audience is impeded with shimmering balloons and soap bubbles. The non-professional cast, consisting mostly of the Theta Arts Group who make a phrasely crowded of athletic forms, pert go-go dancers, pertie looking clutching about the scenery.

The leading roles are played in as more stylised as the production has room for. Edges Mansfield as Puck is merely out of Gilbert, though he travels by motorboat whenever possible. Even Troyd and Pet Skewington are noble and likable in their Theseus and Hippolyta scenes, and then turn it up as Oberon and Titania, while the Athenian lover tries toween a standup of romantic love and the enthusiastic wrestling of dreams.

A final reference to the presentment, which is clearly intended as a defiance beyond all possible criticism. As good as the play is to find space for all its innovations, it has a late 17th century operatic version. Immaculate by Purcell, which centred with the Shakespeare text several and ends in a chorus of Ophelia and a dance by six rounders, which was said to leave "the Court and town wonderfully pleased". For those colour and spectacle the Adderleyean version outdoes the dimension and magnificence far, and one finds that both the court and the town will echo the seventeenth century comment.



Top: Robert van Maacken (l) and David Taylor (r) as Hellhounds. Middle: Helen Haugh (l) and Linda Gaskins (r) as Lili. Bottom: Dennis Ferguson (l) and Michael Johnson (r) as Oberon and Titania. Below: Roland Payne (l) and Linda Gaskins (r) as Theseus and Hippolyta. (Photo: Alan Ross)

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN THEATRE COMPANY

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Cliff Gilham

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM by William Shakespeare. Western Theatre, W.A.T.T., Perth. Directed by Peter Brook. Set and Associate Designer Peter Brook. Costumes by Peter Brook. Lighting by Roger Metherell. Musical Director David Tait. Stage Manager Peter Brook. Stagehands Lesley Goss, Michael Goss, Michael Goss, Judy Best, Helen Eheres, Helen, Nedra, Geoff Smith, Peter Ross, David MacPherson, Tim Riddoch, Brian Michael Staines. From Britain: CAROLYN MCKENNA, Gordon JONES-MOORE, MARY STURGEON, MURRAY SUMMERS, ROBIN VANCE, MARGARET JONES, ANNE O'HALLORAN, LINDA CROTHERS, JEAN BROTHERS, LEE HOWE, CHRISTY MULCAHY.

Gerald Addison's Festival production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* displays a special kind of freedom, a freedom from that kind of pseudo reverence so often brought by directors to the Bard, and which results in productions which could raise abominable examples of what Peter Brook has called the *Quaint Theatre*.

Addison's production, to use a phrase popularised by the rock band The Who and hence (for reasons which will appear later), peculiarly apt to it, was messy, bawdy, big, and boisterous.

Mostly it was partly in consequence of Addison's desire to translate what Polish actor Jan Kott saw in the dark recesses of the play into the result being, and obviously terms Oberon's house of faeries for "punk-rocks"; as this preposition so sanctified itself was applied to a spattered bit of curtain, topped off (or down one side under it) with shiny black suspender belts and stockings. Oberon and Titania were presented as types of the technocratic potential, each possessed of a regal looks and a sexual aggression reminiscent of Ottoman sultans. The lovers pursued each other in so much fanfare as for the chance lotion taken to fell who embrases only just short (in reference to the test of copulation).

Great it was, because the production art is an art hung with coloured electric lights and suggestive of the excesses under the big top. The fairies' faeries were dressed as if several who boasted a rock band which accompanied the performers in cabaret-style presentations—both at the songs of the play and some sections of the dialogue which had been set to music.

Big it was, because apart from the intelligent and coherent use of all the spaces and levels made available to him by Peter Brook's last ten-year-old version of the book and gallery-like set used in Peter Brook's famous 1970 R.S.C. production, here tickled out with circus atmosphere, Addison sought always the stunning effect—from Puck's entry on a tiny motorcycle to the reproduction of Brook's marvellous first half-fairy, (Titania's seduction at bottom

achieved amid cheers, whistlers, confetti), and titillatingly Whistlers singing the epic log in shenanigans, everything was BIG.

Bouncy it was, because the performers worked tirelessly and at a crackspurts set from the opening moments of the play. Edigar Mortella gave us a sardonic little dashabout of a Puck, reminiscent of Joel Grey's Cabaret MC. He danced, sang and manipulated the inhabitants of the faerie wood with delicate skill and wit, so that Titania could easily catch Oberon, small as an ant, procure, confident. It was a perfide dance, persuading a refined technician and can-

didatious physical drawers, and Brook's own always beautifully in control. As Titania, Pat Skinner was fine, ready when it came to song and dance but gave up a deliciously unashamed use of the body on the instructive score. The courtier of lovers was, as a grumpy, irreverent but energetic

Morally, bawdy, big and bouncy Addison's production certainly is—it is all these things and more: a delirious spectacle, a comically inventive assault course. But it lacks what the most intense audiences, Peter Brook's *Dream* had in abundance: wholeness of mood. It is not so much an interpretation as a series of stunning production numbers. In contrast Addison has broken up Aristotle's six elements in a slice-and-dice Unknown studio-type spectacle the lowest becomes highest. When Brook sought and achieved a magical synthesis of the Rough Theatre and The Holy Theatre, Addison/Brook has opted for the energy of the Rough Theatre in a production filled with echoes of the wild spirits of various, madcap halls and caverns.

It is above all a popular production, aiming not to please the academics (a little extreme anywhere, and one which Addison/Brook has been sensible enough to abandon entirely long before this review) but to bring the juvenile and Shakespearean together in an atmosphere of pleasure and Festival excitement. On that score, it rates thus success. To judge by the response of the first night audience it will be a resounding hit. (D.H. Gates is its Festival Round-up of the last year, was edited by Cliff Gilham.)



Peter Brook as Oberon (Puck) and Anna Hopkins (Oberon)

WHILE THE BILLY BOILS

Sue Kolesnickcy

WHILE THE BILLY BOILS An Evening with Henry Lawson and Lennox Tait. Drama Centre Wilson Library College Park, Canberra. In part at the 1872 Festival, Perth. (R 27, 18-21)

Lennox Tait, skilled in the art of dialogue, descended like a hawk to his present a framed and maimed portrait of Henry Lawson, the writer and man. The evening was devised as a show-in that involved a public meeting by Lawson of his poems and short stories, strung together with reminiscences and personal anecdotes. What we were given was not a literary reading of some of Lawson's most popular work, but a thoroughly convincing dramatization of the man behind the work, a man of good humour and comeliness, of compassion and likeability, of great integrity, and the pathetic, stoical, lonely, inclined to self pity, plagued with a sense of personal failure.

Tait entered as a shuffling, shy public performer, rather uncomfortable in stage wear as he moved around the lecture. His initial embarrassment was soon over. Lawson revelled in the familiar world of pub and shearer, diggings and bushranging, with a mixture of self嘲笑, hearty songs and memory. These were moments of high hilarity for both performers and audience as Lawson recited through the comic "Gulliver and Grumbley" (a parody of his good friend Parson's) Interspersed, songs luring around, and there were fresh and vigorous readings of the old Remounts farce. The Lauded Day

thus remained us clearly that the music of such work has no large impact in it being read about.

But even beyond the humour, Tait was able to convey the hearty, bluff nature of Australian literary and historical legend. His reading of "The Union Bunkie Bill Dool" was a delightful blend of pathos and dry irony. Here Tait contrasted the liaison of bushranger and sympathetic, aware of loneliness and transience, underlined by traditional self mockery. And Tait's presentation of the songwriter and story-teller was bracketed with nostalgia, an impossible reminder that this world of mateship and pads' hardness was passing. Life for Lawson, both off stage and as it appeared before us, was already young.

Thus the programme's second half, although distinctly more sombre in tone, had been adequately prepared for in Tait's portrayal. At the constant tap from the unceasing Bush Band effect, Tait evolved into Anne Australia's "Alice Clark" an irresistably sentimental story about the exploitation and misery of a young factory girl. Quiet and understated as Tait's reading was, it couldn't improve the audience's abiding embarrassment at the mushy deathbed scene. The note of increasing desperation and hopelessness was evident, too, in Tait's reading of "Poor Bertha", another self-sabotaged and much-loved piece which reveals unambiguously Lawson's shame at his situation, failed marriage and public disgrace. Here we were but removed from the sheer light-hearted bumpting. Lawson, now a solitary and tormented figure



Lennox Tait as Henry Lawson—Photo: Geoff Corlett

acted inconsistently, torqued, broken in spirit, in front of the silent and moved audience. Even the Hostel at the bawdy "Busted from the Bush" (one of my best known pieces I felt more than momentarily to relieve this sense of isolation and desolation).

Lennox Tait's performance was informed by a intuitive understanding of his subject. Through voice, gesture and choice of material, his costar Lawson is the evocative basis of such melancholy, naive reformer and hopeless romantic. What he gave us in the re-enactment was, and before amongst the pointed pangs and bulbarisms of the public platform, was a memorable and moving portrait of a complex legendary figure.

seemed to have been sadly evident in the role of what O'Casey describes as "a little, thin bit of a man". At first, the first half of the performance developed insufficient impetus and tension to carry the action through to its conclusion and end.

There were, however, some ingredients in decent performances. Martin Vaughan's mechanical man and his sense of character as Flaherty Gaol was a pleasure. Alan Hickey played the comic moments of Sean's bogies with plenty of attitude, but missed some of the poignancy of Sean's crisis at her death. Linda Lindsay, as the consumptive Michael, provided some of the few moments of genuine pathos in the evening.

Alan Fraher's dirges were workable and pleasing to the ears, though the set and costumes for the Perth season were too clean to convey the proper atmosphere of misery, decline. As a consequence, Mullin's dissatisfaction with her surroundings lost its impact. One wonders, too, why the British soliloquy should appear in such fine孤僻 condition at the height of a street fist-fight. The play's naturalism was weakened also by the apparent decision not to maintain the authentic Irish accent. This was probably wise in the case, but it would have been better on the part of the cast had it settled on a clear text and unambiguous comprehension accent.

As a final quibble, we in Perth, though well provided with good theatre, look forward to our occasional opportunities to see touring companies from the rest. We were disappointed on the occasion that the Old Tote did little justice to the play and to the enormous local expenditure on the season.

OLD TOE THEATRE COMPANY

THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS

Bill Durston

THE PLOUGH AND THE STARS by Sean O'Casey. Old Toe Theatre Company. Peacock Theatre, Perth. Directed by T. J. T. Davies. Set Design: Alan Hayes. Costumes: Brendon Clugston. Lighting: John Hayes. Stage Manager: Michael Gough. Cast: RICHARD GRANITE, Peter Flynn; ROB RADCLIFFE, Young Gran; MARTIN PRESTON, Brian Murphy; ANNE MURPHY, Mrs. Geoghegan; LUCAH MORAN, JORNA HESKETT, Mrs. Murphy; VAUGHN DOYLE, Mr. Geoghegan; GARRY ADAMS, Dr. Breenan; VAGHAN DOYLE, Dr. Sammon; DEBORAH WILLIAMS, Mrs. Tony; TOM RAYMOND, Mrs. Kathleen; JUNE COLLIE, Jennifer; RAYMOND MUNROE, Senator Tom McCauley.

The Old Tote's opening performance of *The Ploough and the Stars* left me in the last Act and despite a few spurious individual efforts, never recovered it. The fundamental problem was clearly that the Old Tote had not achieved the degree of ensemble playing required by the play and as a consequence the play's extraordinary visuality was disassembled.

Hugh Hunt, the distinguished visiting director, gave on a principle of the place in which the balance too frequently tipped towards sympathy for the last, a time which cuts the edge of O'Casey's comedy and runs counter to his bitter and distressing panoply of heroes and pitiful men. O'Casey acknowledges individual wills of bravery but denies Irish and British alike the dramatic serenity they make in the name of patriotism. The peasant production often failed to maintain this sense of peace.

A major defect in the production stems in part from a failure to establish O'Casey's early effects of laughter and pathos and build on them towards the harrowing finale. The last Act in particular, lacked shape and suffered from poor timing. Barry Lucas comes to have had difficulty getting into the character of Mr. Geoghegan in the opening scene, perhaps because one stepped. Mr. Lucas not at home with O'Casey's blend of Dublin dialect and poetic diction. Rob Radcliffe was disconcerting as Peter Flynn and, indeed,

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING GROUP

IT'S CINGALESE FOR LIGHTNING

Margot Lute

PLAYLET: IT'S CINGALESE FOR LIGHTNING by Peter Sturz. Directed by Peter Sturz. Presented Perth Drama Theatre. Main Stage, Auditorium, 23 & 27 - 8 & 17. Director: Peter Sturz.
CAST: CLAIRE DODDIN, WILFRED LEST, PHIL MCKENNA, ALLAN REEDMORE, GREGG TUCKER. **SET:** GUY POTTER

As the Odeon's, the Australian Performing Group presented a new Australian play by Stephen Murray, directed by Paul Hampton. Based on the rise and fall of Australia's most famous race horse, the tall, dark Lap La! Lap (Cingalese for Lightning). Please, is the most memorable thing about it. In style it is by Las Dreyer out of Nellie Melba but it doesn't reach the pace or the stirring power of *Las*.

A preoccupation for this apparently stale old historical drama is that the characters should be larger than life: the language colourfully inventing, and the humour outrageous. Here the characters are smaller than life (and of course the scale is irrelevant by necessity). They aren't given smooth, good lines and even have the fluorine taste avoided rather than taught. The actors, which doesn't amount to much, let loose in fits with interruptions, reverences, songs and rapid changes from scene to scene, but on the rare occasions that longer exchanges are called for the dialogue is colourless. Highlights are such meek examples of fuel here as the

only were 'I'll get something out of a horse is by following with a shovel'—or the tale of the jockey who rode so close to the rails 'that he got splinters in his leg.'

The characters are neither solid nor funny nor likable enough to create much audience involvement. There may be some sympathy for Claire Doddin's Norrie, the hero's long suffering wife, a better jockey for getting her husband to let fly with the language while she's passed. But the hero, Hughes Tellip (Lap La! Lap), himself is played as an open-mouthed idiot, Dacid and Deva style, by Phil McKenna, a characterisation that reveals the results of pastic mimesis about the horse's nature hard to credit. Without Lest provides a rough model for as Devil, a grasping businessman who is pressured to buy the unknown horse while under the influence of a very powerful drug, later sobered up to regret the deal and leaves it to Tellip to save on tellin'. Rest. (Then takes it back and raises it in the manner of trumpet.) Lest also doubles as Boyton, a wacky lecturer who provides some good moments—particularly in a lengthily alien-movie-style scene involving a fedder and an old key (Alison Richards) determined to get a good place in the success.

Aided by a maximal set of white screens suggesting clouds, dances, games and barriers, the play makes considerable demands on the visual and

who were under-rehearsed for the casting, with their bad timing—and one character for several reasons being addressed by the words named. The basic pattern is lively, brief scenes between the principals and others, punctuated by the sporadic appearance of two off-stage jockeys—Alison Richards and Suzy Foster—who act as distant sound effects and some shillers, also contributing a gallery of race track characters. Suzy Foster does a series of hopeful notes, including a blind 42-year-old apprentice, and Alison Richards' jockey is a very tiny bank manager who ends up duelling in the stockroom.

Where the play falls disappointingly is in the lack of dramatic depth. Hughes' timidity and faith and general irresponsibility is overshadowed by the emphasis on the fair characterization, the studly battles that go on before the laundry are run, racing, there isn't the tension—nothing is ever allowed to develop. As for the story in the programme that 'the spectacle and smell and sound of the race game is the intense energy' of the play, this just isn't so. Any energy there is is generated by the cast, who stamp and sing and move and don their lightning costume and act things, and do their best to convince us that there are more than six people running around as the large stage.

There is a point to be made about the venue for this production. The A.P.G. stated presentation is deliberately non-theatrical, and therefore looks out of place in the dusty surroundings of the long (and half empty) Odeon theatre. On the other hand, using the group out of its element serves to play up the rather affected situation as they have developed in a frantic bid to be as different as possible from the much stupider commercial theatre. True, it achieves much of the freshness of the original school play but also, this time, the distance.

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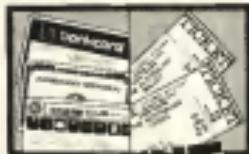
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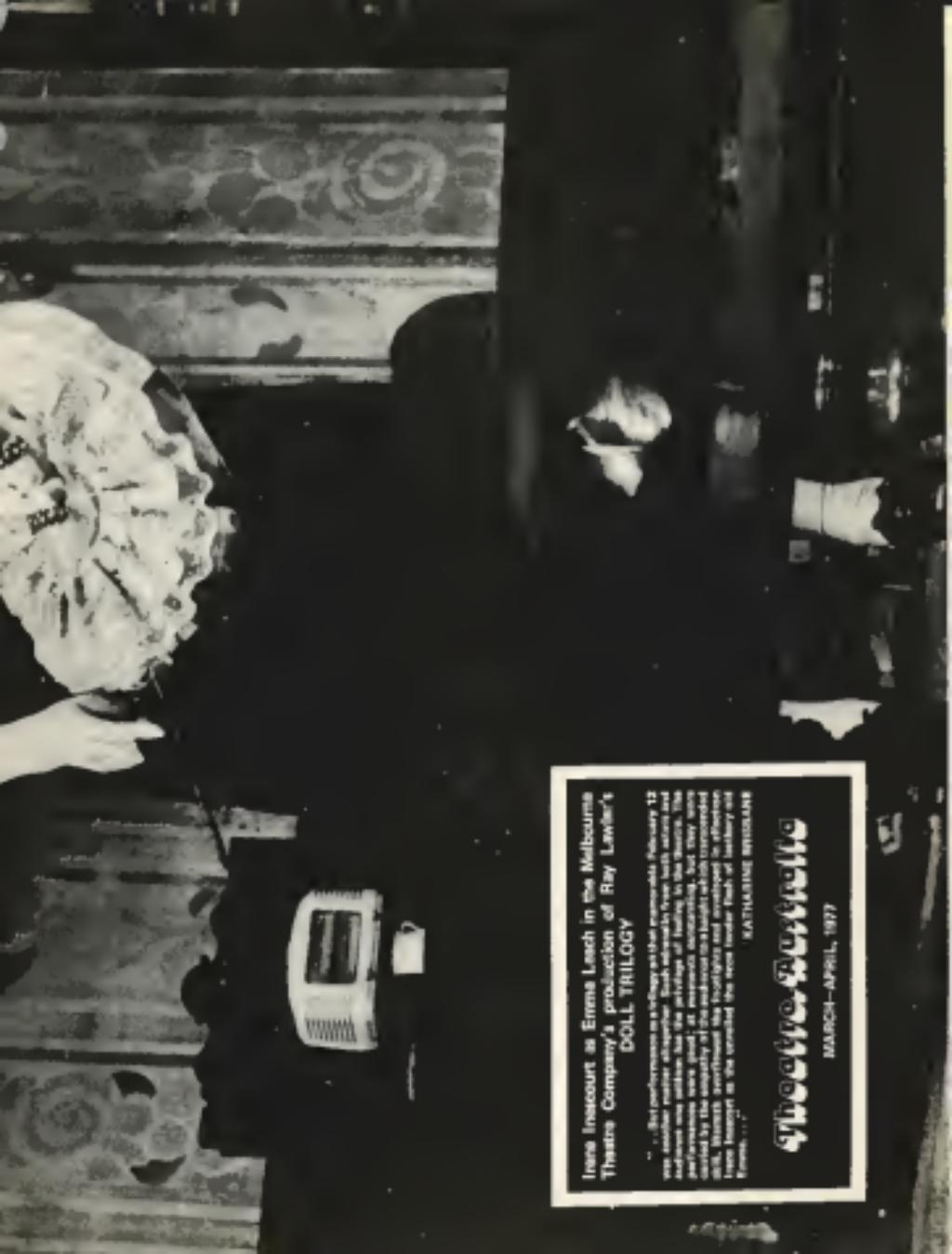


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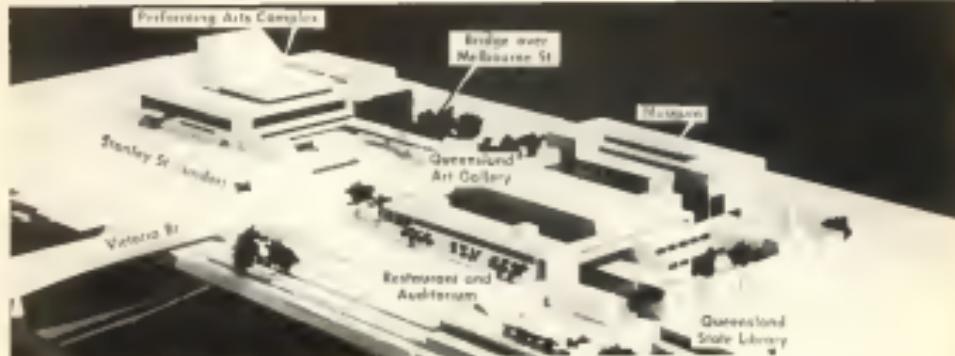
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THE QUEENSLAND SCENE



Facility or Liability?

At 11.35 a.m. on Friday, March 11, the Queen stepped onto a strange-looking floating object in the middle of the Brisbane River and pressed a button.

Much was said. She moved into the air and so her Silver Jubilee Australian Tour was off, but her simple action did more than that.

It gave Royal assent to an ambitious cultural extravaganza that seems certain to be come a major political headache for the State Government.

Activists of the movement is the first committee to be involved in construction of The Queensland Cultural Centre—long the dream of moneyed merchants and leaders.

The project was originally to cost \$48 million and now has risen to \$80 million. Highly placed State Government officials readily admit that the cost exceed \$100 million by the proposed completion date in 1983. Wilder claims have put the final figure at a staggering \$200 million.

The centre is destined to be labelled another money-eating Sydney Opera House, runtified or not. You don't have to drive back to the tip to remember the massive cost escalation involved in the Sydney harbourside showpiece. Estimated to cost \$3.5 million in 1957, the final bill was \$100 million when it opened in 1973.

The sheer magnificence of the Opera House is what beats the critics, but there is no longer a big issue. But in Brisbane the more conventional, sound, low-profile complex will have no such advantage.

Louis Henzell of the QCA said escalating costs to the centre's Planning and Establishment Committee Chairman, Sir David Blair, makes him bristle red.

"Of course it will escalate—but because of inflation only," he snapped. "In October 1974

the estimate was \$58 million. No doubt there has been substantial escalation since then and would be \$80 million on present day terms. But that's what I have been trying to get into people's minds is that we will not spend any extra money on new facilities."

For the QCA, the government's financial statements rarely worry critics or political point scorers. Already parochial politicians in ensuring arts are improving such vast expenditure on an Brisbane project, particularly, as one who wishes to remain nameless said, "in a poorly suited for the heavy-hitters and sedentary in the city social life area."

As for the complex itself, the first of four stages, the art gallery is expected to be finished early in 1979. Work on the performance arts centre should be completed by mid 1981, the theatre by mid 1982 and the library by late 1983. The 13,000 square metre Queensland Art Gallery is an essential priority—the State's art treasures are now being housed in a totally inadequate gallery in George Terrace as well as another stop-gap home in the Brisbane.

The performing arts centre will consist of an open and flexible seating capacity up to 2000, a concert hall for 2000 and a studio theatre for 400. The opera hall will be of variable size with a seating capacity to accommodate the most intimate to the most reverberant.

It is hard to get an argument with many people about the fact that a cultural complex is needed, but there is plenty of room on the reservation for escalation. In grandness and its ultimate efficiency.

Keith Wright, State Labor spokesman on Cultural Affairs, "The State Government will have to get its finger out and find that centre while we can."

"It is all very well to talk of increased leave and mileage but it is of little use if there are

IAN MILLER on the need for and cost of the new Queensland Cultural Centre.

no facilities. The jobs they as well go back to their manufacturers and milieus if there is no place of entertainment."

Sir David said he had visited Adelaide and Sydney and it had become immediately obvious that Queensland needed a decent arts centre. He said there should be ten-and-a-half versions of the centre in provincial and country areas when the government could afford it.

John Thorpe, Executive Director of the Queensland Opera Co., felt the cost estimate for the performing arts section of the complex was \$17 million. "Having regard to the physical state of theatre in Brisbane it is something that just has to be done and money that has to be spent," he said. According to Mr Thorpe the final concept of the variable pit for the opera and ballet theatre, seemed to satisfy everyone. "Everything seems to be coming along the right lines," he said.

Another contention is that the concert hall is too small in one made by entrepreneur Michael Eapley.

Sir David May insisted, "He's talking about bringing out Hunyev or another person of such stature. It has to be realised that such an event where an audience of 5000 could be attracted would happen only once or twice a year. We have to be prepared, and sufficient investigations have come up with the 2000 capacity."

He also denied suggestions that Opera and ballet would need additional subsidy because of the large cost of running the theatres.

Perhaps we should leave the final word with former State Treasurer Sir Gordon Chalk who gave the original evidence to finance the project. "There will be no reason for it to be referred to as another QCA House. What happened to the Opera House was that people did not understand what the final design would be nor how to put the roof on."

THEATRE CHRONICLES



Alan Edwards, Artistic Director, Queensland Theatre Company.



GTC

Auditions from the New South Wales Drama Foundation is gratefully acknowledged for the *Theatre Organisational series*.

WHERE THERE'S D...

Don Batchelor

The Queensland Theatre Company did not grow organically. It was a government graft on to the local scene. Beginning with an untried Board, an "outsider" as Director, not a single partner of its own, and no group of professionally trained personnel to draw in, it might well have addressed itself for some time to laying foundations.

However, a combination of Government's often uncritical sense of itself and the amazing tenacity displayed at the turn-round months of G.T.C. history allowed no time for gradual building. An immediate and unquestioning commitment was made to the model of a main-line professional repertory company along provincial English lines, with the additional, unpredictable extension of serving the whole State simultaneously.

The Company functioned in early performances because it found an audience that was substantially new and more interested in a night out than in matters of theatrical technique and approach. In such a context, distinguished theatre-going finding superior theatrical effects or values in certain what-for shows carry little weight.

As to any challenge pedagogically self-grown, the issue of a related alternative has once or twice been raised, student but partly this and

QUEENSLAND

Winners of the 1976 National Critics Award

EMERGING PATTERNS

Brisbane's Albert Hall was, in its latter years, a shabby and unsatisfactory venue for live theatre. Yet generations of Brisbane theatre-goers had been raised on the amateur theatricals presented in the modern centre city hall. Fitting then, that from its ashes should arise a fine theatre and the State's first resident professional theatre company to play in it. For had it not been for the insistence of the trustees of the Methodist Church, as late as 1968, in re-developing the site the State Government Insurance Office replace the venue for the annual Methodist convention, the chain of events leading to the rapid formation of the G.T.C. may not have occurred.

The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust approached the Queensland Government in mid-1968 to request finance for building a theatre in Brisbane to house a resident company and to provide an alternative to His Majesty's Theatre for visiting shows. The Government declined, pointing instead to the G.T.C. theatre-to-be and for the next three years, the unlikely combination of the Queensland Government, an Insurance Company, and the Trust, tried to produce the G.T.C. Early in 1969 a Board was set up under the chairmanship of Sir David Muir to establish the new company. Muir was later chairman, and so proceeded with the first production, *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, utilising the talents of the local semi-professional group another classic -inspired Australian plays and some of the more more contemporary works from the West End. Of course box office did

BT THERE'S HOPE

its representatives have evidently given their own way rather than continue to do battle. Some disaffected ex-Q.T.C. actors like example, pulled the 1974 production of *Godspell*, were removed from the foyer and apparently heard little again.

Part of the reason for the initial receptivity of the Company has been its commendably careful stewardship in business matters. The Board Leader Sir David Muir (Chairman) and managing director Alan Edwards (Director) has presided over an ordered if stately administration, where growth has been considered and steady, and nothing approaching a major financial blunder has been suffered. The result is that subsidising bodies have心ily supported expansion plans. Present grants, totalling round \$600,000, are six times those of seven years ago. A stated policy is somewhere potential in production of plays which are wholegeness and balanced, featuring those virtues and mercantilism essential to good recruitment, and staying within the range of stage theatrical fees. Adversarial or erotic operas are scarcely entered for, and space is introduced with reservation lest it offend the general taste. In all this, Muir and Edwards are not unwilling of who button the dress.

Two thirds of the play in slate have been directed by the house team of Alan Edwards

Joe McDermid, and Murray Fay, each of whom has a strong status. In teaching both Edwards and McDermid were staffers at N.I.D.A. before working with the Q.T.C., and the same general bias towards teaching can be seen in their joint director. The outcome on-stage is usually impersonal rather than a fresh or revealing interpretation. A few fastidious visiting directors might scratch the "looseness" for both actors and audience.

In its youth work an editorial job has been done in introducing theatre experience to the community of young people, especially in schools. The road has been towards locally written or dramatised pieces closely derived from the experiences of school-age people. A recent scheme called "Savannah" will shift the regional focus a little.

The regional aspect of the expansion of "Generalife" suggests to Sir David Muir possibilities for a fuller contact between local communities and the Company as an adult work for country audiences, since it is generally agreed that the present taste varies immensely by place, touring with the Arts Council is something to be considered.

On the whole, then, the Q.T.C. will suffer from the influences of its beginnings and needs a lot more experience before it reaches even greater audiences. The work is maturingly performed and audience has been soberly presented, but there are theatrical freedoms to be breached, judged first to be thrown down, and decisions yet to be arrived at.

THEATRE COMPANY

Queensland for services to theatre in Brisbane.

Peter Laverty

The College Players, below, the permanent Artistic Director, Alan Edwards, took up his position. The task of producing a new Australian musical *A Ram Do*, for the Queen's Hall in early 1970, completed the harrowing scenario. His Edwards' introduction to his new job. But like all fare stories, it worked out for the best. Royal Hearst did without *A Ram Do* but better. There was good publicity and an air of excitement about the new financial events in Turbot Street. The schools' company was not on the road before *A Ram Do* opened, and, a percentage more or like his part, the company was established as a statutory body by an Act of Parliament. The statutory status of the company gave it many privileges but also set a limit for the company which has clearly influenced its development. Its commitment to training, schools' programmes, touring, and indeed the general content of the metropolitan programme, can be seen as the results of that early imprimatur as the establishment company.

In 1970, the first full year of the Company's operation, three of the four productions reported turned the ships. This early success held to two out of eight in 1971, and has remained thus since. The next three years saw the company establish a pattern and grow at a healthy rate. Measures were made up equal to the year, and worked well until the disaster of *Expresso Romeo* in '73 shattered that theory. A succession of traditional Christian parades failed to arrest the blues, or alleviate Brisbane audiences with the habit of family theatre-going that Edwards had bred. However, the overall pattern of the Company's offerings had enlarged and was successful. Each year Shakespeare and

new masters as far as handbooks, repertory, pamphlets and two big plays that Edwards identifies, *Mark's Conspiracy* and *Off Times*, now appear every year from the Brisbane public. Nevertheless the end of '74 leaves the company in a sound position. The subscriber scheme introduced in the '73 season had 4,800 subscribers, and out of a total audience of one quarter of a million half were adults, and half were pupils for the programmes in schools.

1975 was a boom year for the company. *Equus* opened the season and in drawing good audiences and critical acclaim, seemed to indicate an increasing maturity in Queensland audiences. *Dante's Inferno* started in The Theatre of the Shrine which played to 90% full houses and subscriptions at \$5,000. Not for long. Last year saw a 10% drop in subscriptions, and though overall takings have only dropped marginally, Edwards is frank in expressing a very real concern as to the direction the company should take. Not that no options were wide open. The company, established with such a fine staff, seems to have fulfilled many of its functions. It is pre-eminent among state companies in the training programmes it has run, both for its own artists and for youth in the State. It may also fit for the Company that production staff tend to remain, rather than move to Basso, and its policy of giving year-long contracts to actors has established a performance/rehearsal testing in the Company which must react to positively. And yet is it enough? Does an established role, a name with something for everybody, and honest workshops add up to the image of theatrical? Would the *Revolutions* of Maxine "comes the best" theory be accepted by the Company as an excuse for the lack of public enthusiasm, but Edwards is not complacent, and where there's doubt there's hope.

In 1976 Basso came up with an even better play, *Taffy*, a simple comedy that expresses the behaviour patterns of young teenagers and the games they play to make sense of adult behaviour. This year we complete the Basso trilogy with *Prayer*, which includes remember basking on the back of adulthood. Basso, now working for the R.S.C. in London, assures us

END OF A CYCLE

Murray Fay

In 1970 before he opened the doors of the S.G.I.D. Theatre to the expectant theatre-goers of Brisbane and a few days later to Her Majesty, the Queen, for a Royal Performance of the Australian musical *A Ram Do!* Alan Edwards, the first and brand new Director of the Q.T.C. sent a team of actors around the 7,000 mile Queensland School Circuit. Theatre in Education is still at the forefront of his thinking.

In the first year of operations we inherited the poor and sketchy art of the Young Elizabethan Players and the task to enrol 80,000 students with paired Shakespeare and some poetry. For two years we measured our obligation with Michael Boddy touting up the Best Teachers were content with the status quo but there were changes in the audience. In 1972 when yet another production of *Macbeth* seemed to decide it was time for them.

We tried a complete play—the *Anouk* *Allegro* and a *Review—Where's it at?* and Michael Boddy's remissness of the Australian costume industry from 1969 to 1970. As well as breaking away from tradition we conducted a broad scale survey of what plays were being studied in schools and research even on the spin investigation into audience reaction to our work.

Against you an apprehensive response, the news provided a strong but mixed reaction: "Not too bad"; "the kids have seen all year" ... "A two-angled Commonwealth threat!"

In 1973 we repeated the experiment. We went for broke with *Prayer*; *The Dumb Witness* and a review on education. *Bed Moving* (R.R.), by local writer Raymond Farnham—Farnham a disaster, the review stayed in as part of the

Review for a while, and the play was still with Vick Wood, got four out of ten for the CT Broadway *An Evening For Mother Fitch* and hit the deck you, most unexpectedly with Wilder's *Happy Journey*.

1975, how thoroughly confused its teacher and audience reactions we proved so colour our problems. We were trying too much, attempting to enthuse who wanted them to know what young people needed. We were presenting plays that were too intellectually difficult, for aesthetically naive audiences. All our material fell basically uninterested but not was immediately relevant to young Queenslanders. Our technical resources limited by the practicalities of touring extended, rated in comparison with those of television. We were rescued by local playwright Bill Brown. His *George*, the story of a drapery shopkeeper for a small direction, caught the imagination of the young audience. A poetic mixture of music, meadow, and reminiscence, it enthused and enjoyed a lot of results but it got the kids where they live.

In 1976 Brown came up with an even better play, *Taffy*, a simple comedy that expresses the behaviour patterns of young teenagers and the games they play to make sense of adult behaviour. This year we complete the Basso trilogy with *Prayer*, which includes remember basking on the back of adulthood. Basso, now working for the R.S.C. in London, assures us

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Q.T.C. cont'd.

this is his last play for young people. It means the end of a cycle. This year we must take stock and see if there is a more effective way of involving young people in theatre. Fortunately in the remaining months of the scheme we still had a week left.

1977: PROJECT SPEARHEAD.

A \$54,000 Innovations Grant from the Schools Commission will enable us to implement a scheme we have been developing for some years—Project Spearhead.

Spearhead is designed to link more clearly the work of the Drama Teacher and the professional theatre practitioner.

The project has two phases:

In the classroom, a few main areas of acting/teachers give students a vocabulary of theatre skills that will enable them to analyse and present programmes on the issues that concern them.

Outside the classroom, the team works as actors and directors in fully equipped productions, with Community Youth Theatre and High School Drama Clubs. The team will work for two months in the Brisbane metropolitan area and for three months in country districts.

Just as the developments in our health and fitness spring from a nagging concern, so too did Spearhead. There is no Education to often loses sight of its well-spring, the source of its energy and vitality—the theatre. The prime concern of T.I.E. are personal development and social awareness. But once we have developed the personality that would strive to be the end of it.

We do not go on to develop these traits as a means of expression so the extent we could. We do not refine their skills to the stage where the student gets the recognition and joy the actor does out of practising his craft well. No, I don't envisage the High School neophyte N.I.D.A. — You, please save me from the whole process.

Some teachers realise the value of T.I.E. yet stop short of exploring its full potential. These are several good reasons. They do not wish to turn our Shylocke. They do not wish to impose (as the Director of the school) maximalism or canibalism. Few teachers have sufficient knowledge or experience of the actor's craft.

It must be possible to ensure a small but essential body of Theatre conscious and skills that will enable students to express themselves well and that will provide the pleasure of performing a craft well. The problem is which concepts, which skills, how many, how fine? Some hard and private research.

1977: THE Q.T.C. DARLING DOWNS YOUTH THEATRE.

For six years the Q.T.C. has been running a live-in Drama course for teenagers—Theatre Experience Week. After two years of existence the students in talk-back sessions expressed dissatisfaction: "We've had the Experience, now what about some techniques?" So a second course, Theatre Techniques Week, was implemented.

Three years later in talk-back, "We've got all the techniques, now where do we go from here?" Robert Kington, a former teacher/mentor, decided he spent 12 months in Poland with Grockowski and suggested every-The Darling Downs Youth Theatre Project. Kington, Rick Thompson (Administrator) and Lloyd Nielsen



Ryle Ganner, Dr O'Connor and Frostie Gallacher in A Clock, A Clock by A. Savard. Photo: J. & G. Packer

(Designer/Teacher/Director) are now involved in Toowoomba, hub of the Darling Downs and of the first Q.T.C. Youth/Education pilot scheme.

For six months the team will work with 10 to 18 year olds drawn from six centres in the Downs—120 kilometers west of Brisbane and roughly half the size in area of Tasmania. The project will consist in a production of The Book of Genesis devised, prepared and rehearsed in workshops. After its opening in Toowoomba, Garter will tour the six centres from which the

students will be recruited.

Broadly their aims relate to youth and their aspiration. Education and communication in common open minds and the flexibility to adapt old forms to new needs. All these aspects the belief that is important in an experience is the understanding of it. They should uncover much.

For the Q.T.C. this is an important step forward in our direction: the establishment of a professional Youth Theatre and the democratisation of theatre in the state.



Victoria Arthur, Phil Maye, Mark Henderson and Eddie Brown in Springtime

A TONIC FOR IMPOTENCE

Don Batchelor

The people of Queensland appear to be politically powerless. One group, though, the POPULAR THEATRE TROUPE refuses to remain silent. But their method is to charm their audiences, not offend them.

There is a common belief outside Queensland that we Bananas/bananas are a bunch of hicks whose sensibilities are so stewed in the sun that we accept without question the fact that death is political life north of the Tweed River. This assessment knows nothing of the anguished sense of impotence many people feel at the wilder excesses of our "leaders".

What do you do in a place where, on TV, thousands witness a state police officer looking a young woman protester from behind without apparent provocation, only to have the Premier, who claims to not seeing the film, cancel a proposed inquiry by the Police Commissioner on the grounds that the officer concerned explained that he had stopped? (The same officer has since been promoted?)

How do you meet an emergency of 165,000 citizens of Brisbane who signed a petition calling for a referendum on a State proposal to take over electricity supply from the Council, when the responsible Minister announces that the legislation will proceed even if there are 300,000 petitioners?

It was in such a mood of bitter bewilderment and loss at the resignation of Mr. Ray Whittard (former Police Commissioner) in the face of what he called undue political interference in police matters and questions of justice, that I recently saw the *Foolish Theatre Troupe*.

The occasion was a performance of *The Millersmith's Wedding* before a small group of Senior Citizens at something called the Farmer's Hall in one of Brisbane's less celebrated inner suburbs. We were an almost-random conjunction of people as we stood while the other people recited a parry with arresting diction and then led a round-trip tour unperturbedly through a rendition of "God Save the Queen" as a routine prologue to the afternoon's events.

There was a brief up-fronting introduction by one of the traps, and then a good, profuse social performance of the play, and the effect on me was inescapable to the point that I forgot the Miller's latest, always earnest, All-Wise-man. Pleasant considerations started antlerless instead of being the usual barrier to sharing the play.

Something about the ambience was most affecting. There was no pretence on, no posturing,

no bashing, just a keen commitment to a witty little expose of the effronteries of big business, politicians and unions in their greedy exploitation of Australia's recent wealth and the dispossessing of native peoples.

The show consists of a cluster of "images" round the central idea of a home riot which permits some telling analogies about the lot, the house, and the seeming knif in the "treating" of native peoples or about the Queensland Government acting as your entirely Imperial Clerk of the Course.

It is the simple appropriateness of these analogies, with all their innuendoes about the gender's intent for easy money, and the gall of the pastier, an almost willing victim to the Queen that goes to behind the stories, that is so compelling, this and their bold rhetoricality and mocking humour.

To be able to laugh was like a tonic, and suddenly one sensed what power lies in the red robe that informed this apparently banal piece of theatrical nonsense. And, what is more, one felt that for once here was a group which could claim to "karmamanous". As Albert Hirst has said, "There are some avant-garde creatures



Jerry Mahoney, Neil Hughes, Judith James, Roslyn Atkinson & Duncan Campbell in *Millersmith's Household*

which deliberately set out to raise, insult, and offend their audience. We try to establish a direct warm relationship with the audience to deal with the hard message." Well, Albert! This privilege to see it happens not afternoon in the Perrier's Hall in Brisbane.

Albert Haze was the man who introduced the techniques of the style of theatre event to Australia, and the person whose response led it was to invite Haze to the first Gold Festival of the Arts in May 1974, was Richard Fetherstonhaugh (he's his name). On that occasion, a certain group pioneered the method in a production called *Bitter Truth*. It was a largely unsuccessful half-devised attempt that took its political material - the double-dealers - resulting from the Gay Afternoon radio series (will remember it had! Premier Johnson can hear Captain Kirk Replied in deadly combat with his arch-enemy, the evil genius Gorch (Whirlwind).

After the event, all concerned acknowledged a limited success, but vowed to develop the method further. In June 1974, The Popular Theatre Troupe was formed and set about raising the funds to operate.

By now the group is well established though survival is the usual year by year after. These have been support from the Queensland Festival of the Arts Society, while funding from the Queensland Department of Cultural Activities, and the bulk of their money comes from the Australia Council.

But it takes very little to keep them operating. Personnel consists of five actors, a writer and an administrator. There's a somewhat battered Ford station van and an old Holden Station wagon, containing a mountain of stage equipment and prop. The world is their stage - from mess-halls, children's playgrounds, libraries,

cinemas, and shop windows have served.

They have travelled extensively in their home State, but are establishing tours in Queensland as far afield as Aliceville and with city and country audiences in Victoria and New South Wales. Shows have included "a series of vaudeville scenes, songs and sketches about us", *The White Man's Mouth* which looks at the white man's arrival in Australia with songs, magic, acrobatics and games, and *The White Horse Goes to the Movies* which draws on Albert Haze's possible film career in two parts. Mr. Johnson Gets to Town and Mr. Mat Wore Yes or No.

At any one time the Troupe has two or three shows in the inevitable repertoire and holds them for six months or so. In addition, they work at the community in which they find themselves, doing workshops with kids, organising women's meetings, or presenting giant games over a period of four to six weeks. In Townsville, for example, they set up a monster game of Snakes and Ladders and invited people from such groups as the Aboriginal Legal Service, Trade Unions, Friends of the Earth, Art Workers, and Masons to participate. In the end, upwards of 10,000 members of the public turned in the event for just one free night's entertainment.

Whirling there, cheer with a few trills - speakers over a frenetic set up after the performance, or before-hand at some press conference there set up for a show, like this - that the real intent of the troupe is that it is committed to the idea of being "people" by which one means "of the people". It is this care and consideration for all sorts and conditions of men which flows out of their plays into their lives. Of course, they feel in often in they succeed in this difficult task - I wish them with all my heart for trying.



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HOW ARE YOU HOLY TRINITY?

Paul Sherman on the Brisbane Pro-Am Thegrees

Bimbans's currently dispersed network of theaters is hard for the outsider or new comer to map. Twenty years ago I remember the scene was dominated by a Italy, Trinity-Twelfth Night, B.A.T., and Repertory.

Nowadays the scene is very different. The Holy Trinity remains but, except for La Borsa (Bourse), the most vital and innovative work comes from a cluster of smaller theatres, often staffed by C.A.E. and University students, and other young people.

Twenty-Nine. After a road development raised its Gowda Hall, shaved and swelled under Jean Whalley (who else could get us to actually shave our old b*ll to build its grisly emanations at inner suburban Finsbury Park), it always took a mouse

three dots, the three-dot-bullet-pointed package that Greg's production of *Three Sis* and Malcolm Roseman's *Sister* and *Brother* after it were professional. Now that the State has bought the theater, the company may run out of steam. Appropriately, the last play for 1917 is to be *Dangerous Games* (including a double bill with *Twelfth Night*) in Ty personality Bebe Stappan and the Max Siedle, Jossery and Paul Moran. Broadway theater people have more than a little to *Twelfth Night*, and we hope the curtain comes as tautened safety. TNT has proven before that when the Peeps are loose.

B.A.T.—Brisbane Amateur Theatre—Is now The Arts Alway's a friendly, family sort of theatre, its adult casts were recruited by this late Jean Threlkeld and its children's groups were the special aptite of Yvonne Hepple a my old home town on Pania Terria having been tried in her, the Arts result with modesty and dignity has a secure base. Though occasionally striking with an unknown starlet or two from my Melba the Arts prefers a fairly "safe" personnel. Though early this year they'll be out in the backwaters with *Vigors*, *What If?* they'll be back within the next four with *Night Must Fall* and *The Blue Bird Came To Dinner*. Australian drama will be represented by *The Shifting Moon*.

With no audience on the stage, the director

that really tries to kick Brabass along is La Bonte, operating on a mail train of the State Theatre's variety. Looking like a shabby church from the outside, La Jolla is a severely round theatre just across the road from the outer entrance to Arkansas' biggest theatre-in-the-round, the Long Park Rusty League Field-where about a third handle soon at Stearn's Theatricals.

Following dynamic women director Gillian Armstrong and Jennifer Blackstock, La Boite now has a doughty male stagier in Rick Ellington, who was recently bronzing his arse while he was simultaneously setting lights for *Baldur*. Ellington's work is interesting as the result for "these and now" plays. Looking at the lights, I remembered a fourth Brisbane C.A.G. student looked a footless tights onto one during *Big Men Fly* three or four years ago.

Le Soir has resumed much of its old literary prestige while going full-out for new, young blood. Young stages, middle stages, adult actors and writers work closely in and under the theatre, and in the old cottage bread it. "There's a 100 percent renewal in theory, a like every week,"

Le Balala's Bill for 1977 ranges from Seneca's *Oedipus* to rock and roll; but the most ardent live prospect is the staging of all plays by Horace Golding.



For more detailed discussions on methods at Kielce, see *Ch. 5.4.6*. *Background*

prize-winner Jill Sheppard's *The Kids and The Beast* will run shoulder-to-shoulder with veteran George L. Davis in *Heavy It Is Finished*.

La Boite is a strong supporter of Queensland Playwrights which is organising a Queensland Playwrights' Conference at La Boite on the first weekend in April, coinciding with the Queensland season.

Brisbane could do with more of the Perth in local writers than is found at La Boite. There it operates not only at the adult level, but with the "middle players"—where De La Va by young writer Simon Corrigan has now being developed. There has also been a healthy development at North Brisbane C.A.B. where Greg Riddell has been able to have his one act plays performed by fellow students and to produce his own and other full-length plays. Now a teacher, Greg will come back to work with the Student & Parents Union, a group that is male alive and looking

to touring plays by Queenslanders, notably Bill Brown's *Splendid* trilogy, the Q.T.C.'s education department under Murray Fay is in tune with the most progressive T.I.E. work of other groups. The new emphasis on music related Theatre in Education work do not reduce the need for "theater" songs. Indeed, they widen the range from which diverse resources need to be drawn. Though their aims go beyond the serving of a song, they must ultimately start state had writing, especially among the young.

Down and inventive use of even classical material has been demonstrated by Bryan Ryan's *One and Two* players. His Will Shakespeare or *Lover* is no mere mockery of painted Shakespeare, but a rhythmic presentation of a theme, bristling with the harmonious energy of good work that has always characterised the best of his many endeavours.

A truly new theatre in *Comments*, adapted from a former bakery just down the road from the somewhat larger home of Queensland's *Comments*. At present David Gollins is Playlab's ambassador, but the challenge of staging The Author's *Rehearsal* in Comments's really innovative space. Future plans include Chekhov's *The Seagull*, Sam Shepard's *Action of Reason*, Ford's well-preserved "In my she's a whore", modern Polish dramatist Rzeszowski's *White Marriage* and Arthur Miller's *A View From the Bridge*. Comments has destined its interest in local plays, so I guess they're still looking.

UQ's University students are hopeful that a US\$100 grant will enable the Comment Box (Janet the committee but Associate Supervisor to be re-opened, students less in present performance at the Arts. The Q.A.B.'s new above and housing North Brisbane, as well as its Spalding Space, is being a venue for local regional theatre and has many plans including personnel experiences by local poets. Beginning on April 20 Kelvin Grove Community will follow Kennedy's *Chichester* with Stevie's *Moses*, and Kennedy director Gary O'Neill is already starting a Graduate programme. Kelvin Grove College Theatre will do Charlie Goff in April. Students working with Peter Lavinay are into a stunning parap of a *Trojan Internationale*. All the Mayors and Alison Huon's "We was with you at Rigoletto's", share the same art. Last year's *Orange* will see her play as Marilyn Monroe in *Rigoletto's*. Let's hope more than some like it had!

Stop Press: After writing this article, I have heard news that *Comments* is having some problems of people. It seems that complaints to the City Council about noise and parking have led *Comments* to seek other theatrical facilities. Whelan's. This director David Gollins tells me that the Shakespearean season will open for the winter, from April 7 at the Avalon Theatre, 51 Fred Schenck Drive, St. Lucia.



Looking like a crazy church from outside, La Boite is a squatly round theatre.



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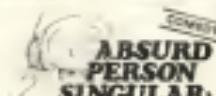
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About fifty theatre people from drama, film and music groups, free entrepreneurial and educational bodies, and a few cultural foundations, took part in the recent short pilot course in theatre administration arranged by the National Institute of Dramatic Art at the request of the New South Wales Government.

Such in the nineteenth century, the careers of such Australian theatre personalities as George Coppin, George Carroll, Alfred Dampier and Williamson, to mention only a few, show that their managers often promoted them out of the ranks of successful actors.

Today theatre administrators need specialised training. Public resistance to the performing arts has brought with it the demand for public control over how the money is spent. Accountability is now a highly processed and professional skill in new essential.

Good theatre administration must, however, be more than just efficient business managers. An awareness of the impact on management of artistic trends is vital, and the success of a theatre company hinges on the existence of a harmonious and creative relationship between the administrative side and the artistic direction of the enterprise.

The purpose of the recent N.I.D.A. course was to supplement the knowledge of people already working in the performing arts with additional skills and information designed to help them function more effectively as theatre administrators. Among the many salient facts and figures expounded at the meetings, the following questions and remarks seem particularly noteworthy:

ON THE ARTS

"The Arts are one of the measures of a country's civilisation"—Dale Tindall (President of the Board of Directors of the Old Tote Theatre Company)

and THE PEOPLE

"The theatrical enterprises that are going to survive are going to be the ones who do things professionally"—Mr Tindall prophesied, having commented on a trend towards the payment of directors who are permanent, despite their strenuous responsibilities, still act as honorary capacity. He said that the selection of plays for the company's repertoire "should be made by the Artistic Director".

"Theatre is a people industry"—Peter Smith (Silent Electra) talked about production budgeting in the role of Stage Director, advising people to look at the physical characteristics of their theatres, he plus well ahead, keep only one under book but also a big book for regular checklist when distinguishing authenticity.

"Good publicity people are born, not made"—Barbara James (formerly J.C.W.'s publicity officer) said that, keeping in mind that your first duty is to management, the publicity task is extremely important to the theatre organisation you are serving, their "product" and the audience you are trying to reach. The achievement of good citations with the Press are the most important factor.

"I'd rather have an inefficient girl who is a生ata" —Marilyn French (Theatre Manager, Old Tote) having highly efficient and meticulous, outlined office procedures which are organised so that she can tell instantly how many tickets are sold and to whom and when, back to the first tote performance of *The Cherry Orchard* in 1963.

"Any administrator is only as good as his staff!"—

The People Industry

Compiled by Marlis Thiersch

Elizabeth Swanson Horner Administrator of the Oxford Playhouse, at present Director of the South Australian division of the Arts Council of Australia thought that because of the increasing complexity and therefore need for elements of accountability which it brings up with the training of arts administrators, there is a necessity for changes in the arts attitude—which needs to be more innovative—and in the psychology of administration—which she sees as being somewhat negative at present. Skills of a new kind, she said, would be required in future and she exhorted people to "think positive". Accountability and concern were the most necessary qualities in the running of theatre as a business, a concern for the human values and for the human relation of which theatre has a lot to tell.

THE ORGANISATIONS

"One of the weakest Unions (Deviots)"—Mike Crosby (Theatre Department for Avant's Equity) depicted the rise of unemployment among the acting profession when discussing the "desertably good" Federal and State Government awards that govern actors. He said they should be given more and that awards only set the minimum payment, warning that "you will rate generally work against the actors interests." "We are in the business of commercialisation"—Fath Martin (writer, director and writer/agent) outlined the sensitive relationships between theatre artists and their agents, saying that administrators should become of spring advantage of their strong position in being able to put down participation of work. Balancing in the reshaping of new material, she saw strong possibilities in the co-operation between producers, performers and playwrights and would like to see more people in such a situation, and a gamble taken by management on untrained fresh talents.

THE MARKET

"Define your market; get as much as the market will pay but at realistic prices" and above, there is a tendency to charge too little doesn't work as the assumption of too much subsidy, here rest thy"—Doreen McGehee (General Manager, Mecca Viva Society) advised with much emphasis on the dangers of oversupply budgets.

"It is most important to know all about the play"—Pauline Gales and Promotions Manager, Old Tote spoke about Pre-theatre Budgeting, saying that the promotional schedule must be worked out backwards from the opening night and could power a period of three months to open roads.

THE MONEY

"There is a lot of money around"—Ron Hodder (Co-Artistic Director of the Merridale Theatre) started off his fundraising address by referring to the participants' account of affairs in the financial report. These staining entirely false makes, he urged them to Think Big, Aim High and Go To The Top. He emphasised the importance of having a diskette, start diskette and initiative project to present to potential money givers, and outlined two other essentials why business or industry might be induced to donate funds to the arts: novelty, the intrinsic and general art of the means, and money considerations like tax deductibility.

"It is important to recognise the diversity of

opinion towards the arts"—Bob Adams (Secretary of the Theatre Board of the Australia Council) outlined the structure and functions of the Federal Government's arts funding agency, being at pains to point out the 1977 decrease, by 32% in real terms, in available finance from the source. Because it dispenses public interest, the Council is interested in audience development, community participation and the improvement in access to the performing arts by disabled persons. At present approximately 50% of theatre production costs are covered by box office revenue in Australia on average, and the other 50% comes from Federal and State subsidy. He mentioned the problem of educating politicians into accepting that support for the arts is essential in terms of the health of the community.

THE LAW

"There is no special virtue in a piece of paper"—Kas Horler (Director of the Merridale Theatre) pointed out that verbal contracts between management and performers are binding and that a one-page letter of agreement with dates and rates of payment was sufficient to confirm the offer and acceptance of employment. He also discussed *playrights*, royalty payments of a percentage of gross box office revenue, insisting that a firm agreement is important as success can often cover trouble.

THE PLACES

"Teachers are the most difficult people to gain over of the value of theatre and to involve in the programme"—Nigel Corlett (O.N.S.W. Education Department, Speech and Drama Section) spoke about the T.I.E. approach that is relevant to the local areas as well as of the other two forms of theatre in schools performances by administrators and productions of set texts. "Hence put a white elephant as no reason for building a non-profitable theatre if you've got it"—Elizabeth Swanson quoted James Arden's analysis of her motives about what she called "the essence of the minimalist" which threatens to gobble up the lion share of available funding.

Mentioning the alternative principles of "you" or "ourselves", she stressed no say that more the several State theatre companies were established and standards had been raised, theatre needed a place in the community and that served society if the operator used.

Everyone who took part in the seminar agreed it had opened a good idea—all except one person—and agreed they would like to participate again in such a course. There were some problems with those from smaller theatres on how being involved by the compiler account and box office procedures of the Old Tote Lecture aimed a lot long, and more workshop-type situations taken by practitioners would have been appreciated, there was strong support for the extension of the day to late practical exercises on a small, fictitious theatre company. This could help with topics such as the role and managing skills of the theatre company administrator—the potentially varied guild management, event halls, rights, royalties, sub-subsidiaries, and legal responsibilities. Most people thought this sort of course should be held every year, though the attempt to cover in five days a field that in England and the U.S. is treated in twelve-months is an enormous undertaking.

INTERVIEW

DIRECTORS THREE

The spectacular new work of three directors examined in HUGH RORRISON'S view of the West German stage.

Germany has an admirable theatre system. Its foundations were laid in the eighteenth century when every still respecting prince and Germany had many princes men tained a court theatre (Hoftheater). With the social emergence of the bourgeoisie in the nineteenth century self-respecting civic dignitaries vied with the municipal Salzburg and Hamburg for instance, still stand, sound as the Bank of England, which indeed these pompous, free-standing buildings architecturally resemble. Literary theory addressed itself to the matter, and in 1784 Friedrich Schiller summed up its conclusion by pronouncing the theatre to be a 'moral institution'. This establishes the context in which German theatre must be viewed. The Germans expect an evening at the theatre to be serious (dark suits and long dresses), even if it is a comedy, and they will tolerate a high level of punning and banter, modestly assuming that something significant may be happening which is above their heads. For a German, the local theatre is a matter of civic pride, administered and funded by the Ministry of Education on the same footing as schools and universities. The result of these attitudes in the Federal Republic is a network of 75 standing companies, with 380 stages across the land which have regular professional performances. (The German Democratic Republic, which is outside the scope of this article, has 53 state companies.) In the 1974/75 season this network cost 934,000,000 DM (£620m), only 18.4% of total running costs being taken at the box office. This record subsidy has provoked heated arguments about financial priorities, but so far no state theatre has been closed.

What are German theatropians currently getting for the taxpayers' money? The dominant figures are the directors. New plays have received broader than usually requested reviews in which directors re-invoke the classic. From Shakespear to Boas indeed even Aeschylus has been emulated freely, or at most often and often narrow interpretations. The result is often virtually a travesty. What say Boas? A God's Head took like a magnet had written off! Hans Knappertsbusch must have asked himself before he tackled the play recently. The most noteworthy productions in the last two seasons have come from Peter Stein, Peter Zadek and Claus Peymann.

Peter Stein's company at the Schauspielhaus am Halleschen Ufer, Berlin, is currently presenting a Shakespeare production (*Richard III*) at the Olympia Ufer (a massive sterilized for the sports). Unlike the other subsidized theatres which hold about ten productions in the repert-

ory and after several of them each week, the Schauspielhaus is only concerned to keep producing a season in short runs. Thoroughness and meticulous detailing mark the Schauspielhaus style. A play is mocked, debated by the full company and voted on. If it is accepted the director adds elements on the basis of available material for study, roles are distributed to actors, designers, dramaturgs. Indeed everybody concerned and the company reflects on a round of analyses in which the social, political and literary background of the play is explored. As in the case of their *Player Antibodies* in 1974, the Schauspielhaus in Düsseldorf staged the two initial results of their 're-invention' of Elizabethan English in a grandiose exercise in applied theatre science called *Shakespeare's Mystery*. It was a fevered historical review on successive evenings in a distract studio studio. As you came into the bare hall you were walls and decorated with random scenes from the period: an actor in trousers on a tight rope, others assembling in the corners, meandering in the middle, while resonant with antique voices recited monologues with the coined Leo motto. After the frenzied finale some casual audience Erasmus, an eating fish, a political speech by Elizabeth I, themes on malfeasancy, punctuated by a number of half-somewhat attired looks, and a dust from Richard II, all enveloped, simultaneous events scattered over the floor. 'Mystery' is the next phase, events to wend through, one an enigma's study, a focus on the influence of the plotters on the parts of the body, demonstrated on meaty codons, a view from Tournier's *Armada* vaguely with much hastened travelling. These are queer people! Karl Ernst Osthaus said the season's first which imagined newly costumed peasant food. Models: Boekel, Faust-like actors and amateurish mock Shakespeare's Islands, and selected passage of the Bard are delivered to when our appetites for the production, when it comes,

This is Stein's last production since Gorky's *Semmerföck* (Düsseldorf 1974), which toured the European Festival circuit that year and will be seen in London in March. It is set on a stage, dark stage (like K. E. Hartmann's) backlit beds and rails, and resolved in a thicket of red brick timber. It is flanked by the windows of two houses, for the year is 1901 and we are in the forest, village, town which professional men commute to Moscow in the hot summer sun. The characters are all average throughout—the lawyers, the hoteliers, bistro owner, the half-life, cynical and inert, the organists, nitrate factory owner, the independently poor—revolutionaries all, and their women have their Dialogue-flickers. In a life as that very hot environment, despite their one prose to the next identity code can a few makeshift words penetrate, subdue, temper, turn our emotions? The characters grasp and hold, look, touch their souls, picnic, elegantly attempt suicide (with sword) until finally a group crystallizes around Winters, a kingsoftfiring, open hearted wife, and the soul,

optimistic Marie Lüttwein, a doctor. They beat a retreat through hatched lattices in a process of re-invention. Dense, gripping theatre—phrased like chamber music, each of the 12 acts vastly, undepicted in character from start to finish.

This kind of fully orchestrated, methodically detailed playing of thoroughly researched materials (Gorky's so far not radically reorganized and expanded) has made the Schauspielhaus Germany's unofficial national house of art, which it assumed the moment that the Democratic Republic's Berlin Ensemble, fully in decline, has relinquished.

Peter Zadek's work is a stark contrast to the finery and poise of Stein. Zadek is *Invasion* (Arabic director) in Düsseldorf, a small industrial city in North Germany, comparable with Sheffield in England, which has a strong theatrical tradition going back 50 years. Here Zadek has cultivated a kind of tough theatre in an attempt to attract a broader public than the traditional, ageing middle-class season ticket holder who had forsaken the minister of the box-office. He and his two lieutenants here revelled winning their own series of exciting novelties (*Spaniard's Journey* was the company's account of *The Journey of the Magi*, and Hans Fallada's novel *Little Man, What Now?* on the fate of a shop assistant during the inflation in the twenties) was determined, complete with *Hanns* and a *legshow*. The national critics share all these contradictions, and the Fallada reference had a cool reception in the London World Theatre season, but Zadek remains a dimension figure.

Zadek's *King Lear* was seen in May 1979 at the Berliner Theater am Schiffbauerdamm (an annual festival of the season's ten most noteworthy productions, chosen by a jury of critics and was subsequently widely touring in Europe). It was evolved out of the Berliner Playhouse but in a vast picture palace, where designer Gottfried Loeserma set up some old flats and a few old chairs from the Twenties show. He also refuted a heap of conventions from the world and the actors were encouraged to wear whatever they thought was right for the role. As Regent-Berlin's macbeth's dress in a black leather jacket and tight boots while Cordelia started out in a pink ballerina's tutu. The opening sequence set the style. The *Askinot*, as it had in, say, a circus troupe wanted to, *Cordelia* for example a bony strong man with his name on his chest, flinging his muscles. *Goneril* and *Ragusa* declarations of affection were military exercises, but Lear wasn't even interested. Cordelia insisted her inviolability and jumped into Lear's bed. After his wild outburst when he banished *Kent*, Lear (U. Wildgruber) jerked up on his throne and stalked frantically about in his mouth stuck fracturist, simultaneously appalled at his own audacity. This style was refined over four hours to see how much of Shakespeare's skill survived when scaled up in terms of poor theatre. Good with great gusto! *Grosztheater's* systems held up for

Induction, a hand hacked off still clenching rifle, a part of iron salvaging from the steelyards well), and occasional petticoats (ilaria carries an Ondine-like naked corpse over his shoulder). Zadek's more recent strength at leaving a script or directionless was his Hamburg production of *Othello*, again in a minimalist way with motley costumes like it had. The acting was stripped of professional polish and reduced to unpretentious vitality and emotional expressiveness, and Lukas Wildenauer as Othello invented and covered in a sticky black nappe, blocked to the walls, and entrancing his Desdemona copiously toro and aft as he embrassed her. She appeared in a series of costumes in the New Western Fata: Lady of the Shakespearian sort. In the final scene Othello chased her round the darkened stage, writhed with her on the bed, and her up with sheets, draped her over a leaden table like a rag doll as Emilia approached, then finally to bed for a dying thing before the Venetian authorities take over.

The first night audience almost rioted after *Othello*, and the critics were cool, but the production has found an audience and is much in demand: Stuttgart, Mannheim and Cologne have already seen it, Berlin, Marburg and Zurich are about to, and this is a measure of the international importance now commanded in Germany—in the West that is. The Berliner Ensemble tried to do a *Zadek* with Strindberg's *Miss Julie* and was quickly recommended by off-Broadway, the production disappearing after a handful of performances.

Somewhere between Stein and Zadek we must place Claus Peymann who has put the Würzburgisches Schauspiel Stuttgart among the top three theatres in Germany (see below) in 1974. Peymann made his name directing new plays such as Peter Handke's *The Rain over Lake Constance* Berlin, 1970 and Thomas Bernhard's *The Spokesman and the Listener* Salzburg Festival, 1972 and he still continues new writing in Stuttgart, bringing out Berthold Brecht's *Katrin*, Max Frisch and Gerhard Rameyer's *Bosley's Children*, a re-enactment of the life in a small German town during World War II written through the eyes of a child, last year.

He has a big, talented company and last year decided to stretch it, without with an unassimilable classic, Heinrich von Kleist's *Kathleen von Stauff*. His audience of classical writers in 1976. The story concerns how story (the title part and the second) combined with a secession music of love (Kathleen falls in love with Werner von Stauff in first sight and sticks to him to the happy end). It is a play full of bold, naive fairy tale situations, and Peymann managed to invert pantomime effects with poetic phrasing. Kathleen's sweet Kriegsgrätzl, a dislocated wing, was consumed in repeated rapes and a impaled skin too. She entices Stauff with a song, and so the down on her to and fro across the stage anything has to the floor in ropes too, a tolling iron pulley off to perform, like Kleist sends Kathleen into a burning castle to rescue a captured son angel horses overthrown. Achim Freyer filled the play's atmosphere on the stage with blue smoke. It collapsed on Kathleen who emerged unbroken followed by a winged angel after the style of a naive, winged Christmas candleholder. The wit and inventiveness of Freyer's designs and costumes constituted much to the play's success. For the finale, Stauff and Kathleen went back round the stage, the latter with a smooth doll's foot on the back of her head, so the evil stalks first. Lore Brunner's peasant look, then the smooth sleek, perfectly expressing Kleist's strange mixture of malice and pathos.



Above: Peter Zadek's *Desdemona* in Stuttgart

Photo: A. Tafel

Below: Peter Zadek's Hamburg Schauspielhaus production of *Othello*



So in Germany at the moment we have been reading in politics, conservative in style, producing definitive, incisively prepared productions, and in contrast Shakespear Zadek exploiting effects of cruelty and barbaric violence that keeps

the audience at a perplexed distance. However there Peymann indulges his pathos and those of his disaster, but keeps hovering in the heart of the piles, into which he absorbs the audience as the play progresses. An American theme in its modern way.

Theater in Education

THEATRICAL PROJECTION AND EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE

Keith Hudson

Mount Gravatt College of Advanced Education, which trains primary and secondary teachers, offers a major electrode sequence of courses in Drama, of which one course is entitled broadly 'Twentieth Century Theatre'. In 1976 we undertook a slightly more ambitious project than usual by producing Chekhov's Uncle Vanya at La Boite Theatre.

We aimed this to be not merely a dramatic production but like an educational enterprise we stimulated the participation of five Brisbane high schools and made plans to take fifth and sixth form English classes in these schools to see the forthcoming production. Vanya's basic drama is taught in Queensland schools, and our idea was that our students should attempt to introduce drama in such a way that when the school students saw Uncle Vanya they perceived it and hence their enjoyment would be increased. After the play we would visit the schools once more to discuss issues arising and to receive feedback.

We began a month's working out, how to explain what drama is and why people do it, and why we thought Chekhov did it particularly well. Ultimately we decided that either wrote from an attempt to identify and deal with the eternal struggle between 'good' and 'evil'. We noted that in the less sophisticated form of drama these dualities are always clear cut, and there is little danger of an audience not knowing where they should be on; you can tell which side they should be on; he always rides a white horse, for instance.

As the audience's experience of drama and powers of discriminatory division, however, these dualities become increasingly blurred, and the conflict becomes more subtle. Poles apart are shown to have their human failings, the real villains may have been in the plot after all. The simple satisfaction of knowing their partner has triumphed in the end is replaced by a more refined pleasure, that of watching the protagonist and directing the appropriate amount of sympathy in either side, and that of letting the balance of one's sympathies move and change as the play reveals new insights into the characters. We found it illuminating to compare recent and old Mine and T.V. drama, and assess the stories and the methods of presentation. When we approached Chekhov from this di-



Memo written in a notebook between Aurora & Vanya

sition, we saw that as a fairly simple social playwright, it is hard to establish clear-cut right and wrong in the play, and to see where his own sympathies lie, perhaps with all his characters, perhaps with none. Our own sympathies may be equally ambivalent. In Uncle Vanya, in particular, some people may sympathise with Yasha, impressed in a ridiculous shambles as a man old enough to be her grandfather, or her mother dismisses her as a manipulative bitch. Some may feel for Yasha, as he bewails his frustration and impot-

ence, others may say it is his own fault. Perhaps Sonia, briefly enduring at the end of the play, seems the most noble character, yet if only she had shown a little more initiative she could have had Anton perfectly easily. Or would she, perhaps, have been wasted on him? And so on. The network of personalities and feelings is so delicate now that we can speculate endlessly.

Students went in groups of three, armed initially with a short and easily recognisable memo on a 'Goodies and Badges' theme. They performed this, and led onto a discussion about the essentials of drama, this was followed by a short film, which stirred in the same way as the first but generally picked the audience's sympathy so that it became harder to decide who was the best good and who bad. The point to be made was that drama shows conflicts sometimes between easily identifiable righteous wrongs, and sometimes more intriguingly, ambiguous.

The students then led the class in a number of useful exercises, in fact in pairs and then demonstrating the additional complexities of drama. We spent some time on this, and involved a great deal of teamwork discussion, most of the pupils hadn't no prior drama before, and the response we got suggested that it might go very well, particularly with the more intelligent classes. Only after all this was Uncle Vanya mentioned. We gave some information about Chekhov and his style of writing, as well as a synthesis of the background to the action of Vanya. The drama class discussed initially that at two intruders from the city and the effects they had on a settled rural way of life. The question was asked: Given these kinds of people all brought together in the same house, what sort of conflicts would you expect to arise?

A student will enter into another question was given that these people all think of themselves as polite and refined, how will their conflicts make them less apparent? This question goes to the root of Chekhov's style: interpositions are shown in tiny ways, sometimes verbally but sometimes only by slight movements or gestures which may be unpredictable to an untrained observer. If, for instance, the class decided that there might be hostility between Sonia and her new, young and attractive stepmother, they were asked to watch the two actresses closely for signs of it.

Following this, each group of students was

and a short extract from the play, with the aim of demonstrating some of the differences between the script on the page and the play on the stage, and showing how one shifts with the text and gradually works towards the vision. One group took the moment in Act 1 between Yelena and her mother, started by reading it, then acted it referring steadily to the script and sequences of lines, and finally gave a brief rendering in which it becomes clear that it is the feeling at last, temper which counts, rather than what exactly is said.

Other groups worked on the Yelena-Boris relationship. Is Yelena's offer of friendship in Act II sincere? Has she Sora's interests really at heart, or is she a callous manipulator? The students had either interpretation, and different movements, intonations, gestures and performances, but always two quite distinct impressions. The importance of, for example, the rhythmic patterns on stage of the two women was illustrated. Yelena seems to Boris that she is not helping. If she looks into Sora's eyes as she says it will set one effect. If she turns her back we get quite another. Lilia Sora says 'You will tell me the truth, won't you?' Yelena replies 'Of course.' It proved easy to show how an actress can convey to the audience how subtlety they should take Yelena's words.

We sent six groups of three students to the five schools. They were well received, and came back encouraged for the project.

Le Beau, in an act of faith which we appreciated, gave us the theatre for three days, and we did everything ourselves. We played three nights, with one respite. We had predominantly young audiences at three of the performances, but on one evening the audience was more mature. I have never known an audience make as much difference to a play. On that evening we presented a student, not play, at each of the other performances. It was a genuine comedy (Igor Chetkov was right in insisting that he was writing comedy). Part of the difference was no doubt due to the fact that it was the cast's second effort of the day, and they may have had less bounce in them, but part at least was due to the age of the audience. The older audience simply saw a different play through different eyes, and the cast responded by playing with more rhythm and pathos. Perhaps it is just that when you are 16 or 20, the腾子 of an incompetent 47-year-old bewilder his regret that he has done nothing with his life is funny, when you are middle aged it is not. The difference between comedy and tragedy is often a matter of those close who you are speaking to the events. That is what was a valuable learning experience for the students, for them, too, the play became more alive as they acted it. The audience showed their new insights at the tape. An example was on Wenda's Act 10 soliloquy about Yelena, which included her first thoughts about Boris. She had fallen in love with him ten years earlier, they would tonight have been in bed together, and the world had been brightened by the stars, and he would have comforted her and said 'don't worry, it's all right, I'm here'. Much to the older audience the first night audience gave a hearty laugh at this, yet in retrospect we agreed that yes, they were right, the idea of anyone feeling reassured by the presence of a bumbling fool like Boris was indeed funny (the fact that he thought it was because, of course, made it funnier).

My own most satisfying moment of the project was on the last night when, in the final act, Arisov is implored by his wife to leave (or not), and the Nanny comes and distract him by offering him vodka. There was a silence before he announced, during



Above: Yelena Aksenova to Sora confessing her feelings for Arisov

Below: Some attempts to console Dasha Vasilieva at the close of the play



which the silly, irreverent and Sondheim remains in her chair to give him something to look at which he doesn't need. In that moment we tried to remind the audience that she had earlier in the play begged him to be different from other men and not drag himself down by drinking. After the silence, Astrov accepts the offer. Hell—perhaps, and in that decision family traps himself in the net that he has cast for himself. That is the tell-dimension for Astrov and for Sennet, after that there is no hope. It is a tiny, understand-methat-and-can't-be-played-too-obviously: the point is that in such tiny, undramatic ways our decisions are sealed. The most pleasing moment of the whole production was the quiet yet unutterable whisper "booooh!" from 40 Brookes Girls' Grammar School girls. They knew the piece!

My own conclusion was that you do not have to offer children superficial, simplified rubbish. School drama need not be *Hair* the *Valestin* and *The Chinese Circular*. Properly prepared, they are quite capable of appreciating art beyond what is at play of reason.

The students visited the schools also interested in discussion about the play and production, and were often surprised by the adult perceptions and intelligent questioning that they encountered. We also received written comments, and I have selected a few to illustrate how well the schools observed and thought about the play:

"I liked the way you had to look for double meanings."

"The empty rocking chair in the end was a good symbol when it kept on rocking."

"Yekhezkiel had part when she kissed the doctor; this was not typical of Yekhezkiel."

"I didn't like the fact that the responses and lines went in keeping with the period while the language the actors used was modern and older than."

"I liked the subtlety of the contrast between Sennet and Yekhezkiel (Yekhezkiel doesn't fit the friend ship with a cup from the same glass). I disagreed with the interpretation of Vassal's character, because it didn't seem like a staged but more of a thoughtful, complex character."

"The disease was good as it seemed to bring more feelings and emotions from the actors to me, so that I felt as if I could nearly walk them on to the stage and become part of their life style."

"There were a bit too much inflections in places they tended to repeat themselves."

"The play doesn't really put theatre in the round, although it draws you closer to the characters."

"The ending was good because it is so different from your usual endings."

"I didn't like the way it ended—it didn't finish how everyone expected it to."

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Ballet

VISION AND

William Shoubridge on The Kinetic Energy Dance Company

I don't think anyone could deny the importance of the amateur and semi-professional theatre groups that abound in this country, strung about under the shadow of the vastly inflated major suburban theatre companies like so many dog droppings.

Their appearance isn't so much in the continuing new work or performing plays that the larger companies wouldn't touch with a large pole, but rather in creating a general base of people interested in theatre and participating and thus creating a more deeply related audience for these established companies.

In dance, the picture isn't quite as rosy. Practically any fool can walk on off the street, put on a costume and act, but people who are willing to go in for the grueling years of training and daily discipline as well as the stringent self-discipline to keep themselves in shape just to get into a amateur dance company for no financial remuneration, don't exist.

So what one gets with amateur dance companies are collections of remarkable half-talents

limpish, overwrought and weary (for amateur & a bad prerequisite for a good dancer).

The performances are embarrassing and dismal in the extreme with the performers continually falling off seats and then rapidly apologizing to the audience (if ever it happened), and the verily embarrassed men looking more like misplaced footballers brought in only to liven the sixteen of fifteen hours.

Really, it's enough to put one off dance for life.

At the other extreme we have the "commercial" university-based groups, offering "Graham technique", anything whatsoever at discount and stuffing their programme with obscure quasi-mystical jargon, incantations, and a plethora of messy stage and lighting tricks guaranteed to induce fury and rage in the conservative soul.

So it's with those thousand souls of sort that it can make favourable mention of in least one group that has played recently in Sydney: the Kinetic Energy Dance Company at the Seymour Centre.

The Kinetic Energy group is not really ana-



The Phoenix - third year ballet majoring in night dancing. "With lots of parachute work."

MYTH

The Dance of Life Company

Hall... you can see that from the grace and fire with which they dance. The dancers have all had some basic classical training and they do get a small pension from the Australia Council—though not enough to have the group together on a continual contract basis.

But what is interesting is that they use both modern and classical techniques, have excellent music, have a couple of choreographers of great passion, and have works of immense shape and good design—including a couple with some plangent and curious things to say about modern life.

One in particular, "Pref Death," although it might induce instant comments from certain people, in a way that keeps it relevant where it's going and just what it wants to say, has enough content to feed an entire program. Where other dance theatre places it comes at you all at once, impressions sparking off many associations within the viewer. The impact is compelling and dramatic.

One moment especially, when a group of people are going through a series of totally self-



Eugenie Kneif and Renaldo in *The Phoenix*

involved conversations, with a various post-and-cross Rosemary as a background of a telephone ringing. Greater assembly, suggests a whole community involved as it is itself, totally oblivious of those around them, and even then not very happy with the things that life has given them.

The work that closed the programme at the Seiyneen Centre was *Pleiotropic Waves*, inspired by Aboriginal bark paintings. One tends to dream in memory of things lost that, finally to attain the memory of the Australian Ballet's *Corroboree*, but this work effectively uses the shape and style of the paintings as its basic vocabulary, in Krey effect, for example, with bodies laid out on the floor, arms and legs склоняясь as if resting on the dancer's situla.

The work is concerned with basic rhythms and survival. Hunting and death, with infant formality, child birth and mating. It traverses the same ages of man and childhood as the and with the entire company coexisting together on the floor and rising to the soaring image of the bark paintings. Primitive Vision is an excellent, smoky and elegantly developed piece of dance drama. It only goes to prove that if you look long enough you can find strength and wealth of subtlety and originality amidst the mark of the "tourists"舞者.

I am afraid that the Dance Of Life Company

also recently seen at the Seiyneen Centre, is another unfortunate example of that mark. The evocation of the hollow extraneous civilisation, Eugenie Kneif, obviously has a more overriding control of clothes and has some sort of perspective silk than an amateur dancer's capacity for intelligence depth.

The Phoenix is one of these hairy old myths that have been rehashed by innumerable of earnest yet uninvolved directors and choreographers. I do wish they would leave it alone. It is a grand, simple and beautiful myth in its own right and needs to be because of that simplicity. That the myth as Miss Kneif has it, is apocalyptic and purifying like "Man is Man Reborn and Purified", "Life is Unrepeatable" and other clichés of the Love/Pain/Hope/Grief/Goodness sort.

There was only one element that was worthwhile, and that was the slow progression of an old woman with a walking stick across the stage in a thin corridor of light towards her ever decreasing shadow. But then was soon lost in the welter of masses, clash, light and darkness to ring and fro-fog.

We've all met Hervé Heinz, Karel Gabon, Gansberg, The Abbot and etc. and I've always harboured a nasty fear that soon we'd see some sort of driveline, simple minded sub-Lindsay Kemp theatrical pageantry out of it all. This is it.



Opera



David Gygor

Carlo Felice Collino, who served a brief term as musical director of the Australian Opera—its first ever—in 1969-71, suddenly turned this summer into something of a cult figure for audiences at the Sydney Opera House. Whereas critics have been divided in their assessment of the artistic merits of some of the work of the current musical director, Richard Bonynge, not to mention his predecessor, Edward Downes, scarcely an unkind word has been uttered over the years about Collino.

Peculiarly during the last couple of years, he has been consistently coaxed well above average performances from the confessed miscreants under his command, inspiring them to after-work beer-fests over ever rising standards. The first and most obvious evidence of this would be a new role from the first performance of the A.O.'s concert Hall Aida in January 1970, when the Elizabethan Sydney Orchestra emerged for the last time from the subterranean gut of the Burlestone Foyle open theatre to play in the ultramodern, acoustically splendidness of the concert hall. Its numerical strengths also suggested due to the demands of the score.

The usual recitals at Tom Littlejohn's designs for Aida had diminished in luster, after three successive seasons have been wrung out of sets and costumes originally intended for one year's experimental use only. But the real wonder of the concert hall Aida has increased as orchestra and chorus alike have gradually absorbed more and more of the subtleties of the Aida years under the continuing presence of Collino—who has so far conducted every performance of the production. Back-ups and down-sorts there have been have been paid mostly by the soloists and stars of the platoons of soloists who have graced the Aida over those three years.

But this year, Collino's talents have been tested much more widely, and to great effect during the summer holidays, with two performances not only conducted all the Aida, but two of the three Puccini operas that have made the 1972 Sydney summer season a Puccini bonanza. Both the revised Tosca and the new Madama Butterfly were sounding.

Predominantly, in the only present of a new production, the Butterfly premiere was the supreme highlight of the 1972 summer season. The unique visual triumphs of opening night were the smashing debut of a marvelously talented American soprano, Leonie Mitchell, in the title rôle, and the distilled essence of Puccini's genius from the orchestra. Somewhere, those triumphs make a uses almost like no papering to point out that there were indeed three—some in the supporting performances, some in John Copyt's production itself!

I had been in awe of the quality of Mitchell's voice, by accident exposed to her splendid portrayal of Bess in Leon Maurol's present, somewhat reworking of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess* could make me, but it was quite clear before Mitchell even came on stage in Butterfly that she was going to be a good deal more impressive in the first item any more recording could make her seem. She floated effortlessly over the off-stage chorus without a

The Ensemble P

trace of the harshness that sometimes marred Kiri Te Kanawa's singing two years, and she isolated the kind of character that could hardly fail to involve all the most beautiful memory of the audience in the unfolding drama. She was a marvellous Butterfly, received almost to the point of obsequitiously at the start, yet never giving cause to doubt her instant that she was capable of the measure of loss and the switch of character, then impelling finally to blinding self-destruction.

Henry Purdon's sets are usually traditional and very effective. Michael Bennett's costume designs are excellent, colorfully Oriental and clearly Western in regard—participants chose for the American ladies, whose flight is emphasized by lowering hem which force them to do so to enter the Japanese house. The lightings, attributed jointly to Roger Barrett and Cadogan, is superb—particularly the transitions from day to night to dawn toward the end of Act II, where *Butterfly* and Suzuki are reduced to silhouettes in marvellous visual extension of the emotion deeper than is written into the score as the weirdly ethereal *Burnning* theme comes and goes.

Castley's production evened easily in introducing the American ladies unattractively into the first act, and in requiring Bennett to move impulsively half way across the stage after really disowning himself, to open the door for Pinkerton. Such shying gestures as the risible *to mica* should be eliminated, as the score implicitly requires, toward *Madame Butterfly* and not his battered letter.

Limbozo Parker's Pinkerton was neither shrill nor a personal singing triumph (fine admiring *limbozo* for Copyt as well), nor was he stupidly worked very hard with him at great effect, but Robin Donald's portrayal of the title rôle at the season was equally effective in giving a different, more overtly dramatic edge even if it was marred by a few of the lessening mannerisms that betray unconvincingly, front-to-the-side. That he is Canada's own son and a real cheff off the old block.

Another Rosalind Blaauwghorn as John Printle was music right in *Spartacus*, Micahogah looks good person and Printle lacks dramatic involvement. James Barker Birmingham was an excellent Suzuki, at first breaking completely free from the mannerisms of Oberon in *The Marriage of Figaro* that have intruded disconcertingly into too much of her other work in recent years.

The Tosca team—Crescendo Santander in the title rôle, Reginald Lynn (Cavaradossi) and John Shaw (Scarpia) was as effective as the Puccini melodrama as it has been owing lately in the season, in *Vivaldi's Aida*, and with all the intricacies of Stephen Holt's designed production required by David Neil's set-hunting, it all added up to a glorious night in the theater.

Everyone was in fine, even thrilling voice. Collino had the necessary shrinking and soaring, unfeigned passion available to the absolute subtlety of the score; he is in the absolute opposite end of the Puccini spectrum from Butterfly. Theprise of Act I has been moved downstream in keeping with its dramatic significance. Tosca and Scarpia no longer share each other round the sofa in Act II as if they are

incipals

come characters in a silent film of the 20s, going to the secret door to the ladies' chamber no longer requires calling in the furniture移overs. Gavroche is no longer tied to the stairs before being shot in Act III, and is allowed no example to the ground in his exit—though Toulz's upstage flight through a phalanx of soldiers who merely stand transfixed and watch her pass by is no more convincing now than it was in the first place, reducing the final dénouement to a bit of a gag.

Copley's 1973 production of *Mozart's Magic Flute* included a good bit of the original magic this time round, though it was marred by shattering improvements in *Wiseana*. Bruce a Queen of the Night, which is slow for and every the best ever heard in this production. Russell MacNeight's Papageno remained as fresh an ever, or even more so, but, alas! Burkhardt's Papagena seemed a trifle hoarser than before. Robert Gerd's Tamino was a little too worldly wise to cut the role, Neil Warrington-Smith's Speaker superb. Graham Vickerman's Sarastro disappointingly unconvincing. Ronald David took over impressively from Ron Dennis in the bit part of the last named man.

The last production of the summer session was William Bratt's *La Bohème*, also reproduced like *Toulz* by David Neal, mostly to great effect. Both casts were excellent, but the individual triumph was Robert Allman's Mimi. It may seem odd to single out Mimi for special mention, but, in creating this character, Allman once again proved just how versatile an actor he is as well as what a tremendous asset as a singer. He shone with the best of them, but was wholly credible when he turned serious; it was a new Allman, not just a paternal off-purpose Allman thrown into a difficult situation in a different stage setting. The companion of his final "Canzon" is Rodolfo, who is about to discover that Mimi has died, and the embrace they accompanied fit were absolutely right and helped greatly to make the last few moments of the opera the shattering dramatic experience they might be.

Allman was aided no end by the absolutely superb Museuse of Jules Pita. Impetuous, tempestuous, provocative, commanding as she must be. Her *Museuse* in Act II, once right fully brought, the house down. Both casts of principals were ably led by the small-scale conductor of Alan Light (Almaviva), Ned Warren-Smyth (Colline) and Gregory Yurich (Schaunard). One might not excuse the feeling that the four Bohemians were really enjoying the horns annoyed in Act I and Act IV, and subsequently the parties of Mimi's sister entrances and, finally, her death was enhanced greatly.

On each of the three occasions I saw her, Jean Carter's Musette started off too weak vocally, and left me unimpressed after Act I, but each time she was quite wonderful after that. With just a little more weight in Act I—which depended largely on the changes written into the score, which admittedly contradicted to a large extent the norma she is physically far right from the start of the opera—she will be a thoroughly convincing heroine.

Both Rodolfo were personal triumphs. Lamberli Purkin, the opening one, carrying on the dramatic and vocal transformation fore-



Lamont Brackell as Dr. Cio-Cio-San, Lamberli Purkin as Pinkerton in *Madame Butterfly*. Photo: Bill Moshier

shadowed by his Pinkerton, Anson Austin even then spectacularly successful, and correspondingly more expressive in his audience singing, far better than I have heard him perform—and also his less wobbly off-stage presence with Purkin and, again here, the sheer artless physique to make them thoroughly credible in this role, and there was very little between the overall quality of their performances. Purkin lacked a little power at times, but his two ariettes "Mimi" at the very end had the effervescent verve of the deeply infectious star, Austin's first act aria was more satisfying, his ending a little less ringing.

There was nothing seriously wrong with John Prengla's Mimi, but it talked the full measure of his usual dramatic commandments: it was a mis- take to cast Elizabeth Freewell as Musetta, but she made a creditable job of it.

Finally, though of these however heralded there was a sort of essential maturity that is very difficult to set emerging in one of the oldest productions still in the repertory of the Australian Opera (opened in 1970, it will). The whole production has matured in the same way that John Gielgud's 1971 *Figaro* matured, only more so—for the *Figaro* was immature to start

with, whereas the *Bohème* was incapable of maturing.

Increasingly, from season to season, the A.O. is proving that certain elements need not be generated solely by new and lavish productions, or the importation of spectacular new stars (Brennan still remains, perhaps more than anything else, and the A.O. in winning its greatest triumphs through exploitation of that very fact). One or two stars planted down in the middle of a run of the mill or worn-out company, the minor roles thrown away to anyone who's around and is reasonably competent, domineering and bickering a production is the point of risking a complete breakdown in dramatic credibility.

The full impact of the *Flute* is greatly enhanced when you can hear a Russell Dowd playing the first ensembles of a Concert when you can hear Frasquita and Mammone played by a Pita and a Prengla, or a Mimi when you can hear Bohème-sorts of the likes of Warren Smith and Purkin and a Allman as effective as Alan Light. This is such an obvious fact it is astonishing to many of the world's big-time operatic commentaries seem to feel no qualms about ignoring it consistently.



AUSTRALIAN CENTRE- INTERNATIONAL THEATRE INSTITUTE

WORLD THEATRE DAY

The following is an extract from the International Message, written by the President of the ITI, Dr. Rudo Bilegan:

"It is well-known that the tragic fate human dignity has first suffered, is ultimately which in its struggle against violence and oppression, it is resistance to degradation and want, can be summed up by one word:

"It is well-known that the tragic fate man must face himself honestly, with infinite sensitivity. To confront his faults and assume responsibility for himself, it taught him to temper and rise to what he could do rather than bow to limitations he'd been led to accept. It taught him equality through emotion, and how one man alone is an entire universe."

And theatre is a privilege. A privilege enabling people to open themselves and to another and share dreams of a just and better world."

17TH BIENNIAL ITI CONGRESS IN 1977

The Swedish Centre of the ITI has sent its first bulletin in rotation to the reverent Congress of the International Theatre Institute to be held in Stockholm from May 21st to June 5th, 1977.

Meetings will take place at the Stora Teatern, Moseberg, Box 3, 116-46 Stockholm, a building designed from the 1890s.
This is a working committee of the Congress General Assembly:
Third World Theatre
Gender Studies
Musical Theater
Study and Publications
New Theatre

In accordance with the tenets of ITI, the working languages are English and French and preparatory working documents will be issued and all proceedings translated simultaneously in these languages. The head theme of the Congress is "Interactions" and general discussion themes will be "Interaction of art and culture and international cultural policies" and "Interaction of theatre and music".

All the Stockholm and some Swedish guest companies will give performances during the Congress and all participants will have tickets. On the evening of 2nd June, a performance of *The Criterion of Possess* by Martineau will take place at the Drottningholm in theatre, the famous eighteenth century court theatre where original sets still survive.

An exhibition will be arranged of items that participants may wish to bring with them in order to gain information about theatre in their countries such as masks, dolls, costumes, photo prints, instruments etc. and there will be facilities for those wanting to show slides and films.

One of the social excursions will be a "Mid night Fair Adventure" 600 miles to Kiruna, the capital of Lapland in the far north of Sweden after which you will be invited a midnight feast along your home town across the Arctic Circle.

Anyone interested in attending the Congress should receive a copy of the bookings form for the Marmon Hotel and the availability prior to June 1st.

COMMITTEE OF THE NEW THEATRE

Following the 1975 ITI Conference in Benin, France was entrusted with the establishment of the Secretariat of the Committee of the New Theatre, headed over by Peter James. Author-producer Jean Michel Rabaté received the mandate to ensure the running of the Secretariat, with a standing committee of young creators and theatre workers engaged in various fields of theatrical activities.

The term "New Theatre" includes "every possible kind of theatre experienced theatre, the theatre of research, of situation, contemporary theatre, cultural minority theatre, men's or women's theatre, laboratory or body theatre etc."

The standing committee produced its first newsletter in January 1977 with letters and information from new theatre groups all over the world including a letter from John Turturro of the Australian Performing Group. The purpose of the newsletter is "to ensure a liaison between companies and groups of the New Theatre, to exchange precise factual information, future plans etc., to provide independence, variety and unrestricted information". The committee hopes to produce a quarterly publication but is only dependent on subscriptions and requests.

So many New Theatre groups writing to receive the newsletter or have information published should write to the Secrétariat du Comité du Nouveau Théâtre, 3, rue de Helder - 75009 Paris

AUSTRALIAN ELIZABETHAN THEATRE TRUST WORLD TOUR

There are still places left for a special Trust tour of India, South and South East arranged by Shirley Hay. The 30 day tour from 20th May to 18th July will take in terms of North London, Europe and Hong Kong. Theatre tours will set the best of drama, ballet and opera as well as time for sightseeing. The tour to London is timed to coincide with the Queen's Silver Jubilee Celebrations. Cost is \$3,400 for a shared room. For further information telephone Cheryl Cahill on 265 1200 or Shirley Hay directly on 449 3275 (Sydney).

PLAYSCRIPTS

The Hispanic Centre of the ITI has begun the publication and dissemination of manuscripts of foreign plays in English translation.

Up to now the Australian Centre has received five plays:
Desolate by the East German playwright Peter Heckla,
Musical Spectre by the Dutch dramatist Gerrit Lemmens

Proteus Politeo's Marriage Lesson by Vojko Hen from Poland,
A Night's Talk by Kyraszt Chiossi from Poland,
Chocnor La Cid by Imre Orkony from Hungary which is translated into French only. If any other theatre interested in the publications please contact this office.

SEMINAR: THE THEATRE IN BRITAIN

The Professional Academic Regional Drama Organisation in association with The Central Bureau for Education, Visual and Exploratory and an International Seminar Seminar for academic, advanced students and those with a special interest in the theatre, entitled "The Theatre in Britain", from 18-19th July 1978 at More House, 83 Cromwell Road, London, SW7.

ENGLISH—LANGUAGE SWEDISH THEATRE DICTIONARY

The Nordic Theatre Union, Stockholm, is planning to issue a new, expanded edition of its renowned dictionary, THEATRE WORDS. The first edition, published in 1979, proved to be a practical tool in theater work, especially in connection with touring companies, visiting professionals, and theater conferences. The volume includes 824 technical, artistic, and administrative words and phrases, most of them illustrated with drawings. The first edition included the five Scandinavian languages and English.

The new edition, scheduled for publication in the spring of 1979, will be supplemented with translations into French and German, thus becoming an eight-language dictionary. The estimated price is SEK 120, plus postage and handling. To calculate the number of copies to be printed the Nordic Theatre Union is requesting from general subscribers to the International Press, write to the Nordic Theatre Union, Erikbergsgatan 16, S-114 30 Stockholm, Sweden, and state the number of copies you will require. Your letter is not binding order, but it will be of great help to the publisher in determining the country of the printing—("Theatre News" published by the U.S. General of the ITI Dec 1976)

VOICE OF AUSTRALIA

In September 1976 the West German theatre monthly *Die Deutsche Bühne* reviewed the Funktionstheater of "Nachtigold Meister", by Patrick Millet, as produced at Haldensteiner under the title "Nacht auf dem Berg".

Following the inspiring Almdale production in 1964, this production became possible because the *Haldensteiner Chöldorftheater*, Wolf Herkenhoff, obtained the rights and the actress Renate Vogel, the translation.

Remembering that the author, born 1812 in for every Australian is a Nobel prize winner and has been called "the German Shakespeare", the reviewer perceptively analyses the play, writing that the title has symbolic significance as well as referring to time and place. Everyone who has seen the man "Achold mountain".

ON TOP

FILMS

Barry Lowe

It must be apparent to anyone, well more than a passing interest, in local production that our films are diminishing their own style, their own ambience, their own vital fire for our distinctive individuality—the Australian flavor that makes us what we are. And this need should be apparent in films about both city and country life probably the legend class documents we have.

The critics and public alike have been quick to (unfortunately) call this ambience "Australian," a word they seem to use to cover a palpable lack of dramatic highlights and the gradual unfolding of psychological nuances with which many of our films seem occupied.

The example, *Premises Hanging Rock* was succeeded the same year by *Momma's Boys*, "undoubtedly slow moving especially in the central sequences. One waited at several points to grope with it instead of wondering 'strangely about'" (Bert Tracy, *Sunday Telegraph*, October 29, 1970) but it will wait on to become a remarkable success.

This preoccupation with being about something, having something to say, and trying, seems technically problematic seems a peculiar obsession with our local press. Almost every recent movie of ours made locally has suffered *Phantom* (Maurice) "But Gavan's son don't really give her [Valerie] a good enough to do full of road moments arranged around what it basically a contrived theme. It looks good but it fails" (Gordon Holt, *The Bulletin*, December 11, 1971).

The " können " is obvious in films like *Colditz*, *The Devil's Playground*, *Goin' to Party, Break of Day*, *Queenie of Sorrows* to name just a few. It is no end yet for some to as to the reasons Australian film makers have declined the English and American schools of heavy narrative, the plot-driven and contrivances and instead forged ahead in a style more in character with the communists in which plot takes a second place to the characters and the affect their environment has on them. Most of our better films are less about events than they are about people. For the reason plot synapses of our films can be disarmingly simple and people may easily melt the screen.

P. McGuinness in the *Brisbane Times* (January 13, 1973) takes a

savile at our so-called "models" movies but notes no longer other films set in a past can say as much about contemporary society as one set in 1973.

This is what a lot of people have been missing with the new Ken Hannan film, *Break of Day*, which everyone agrees has been beautifully photographed but "it is a pity that it attempts to do little... there is a chance that it could do well in industry circles, where some people, no doubt, will get excited about *Galaxy*. Or maybe there is an R&B club or two" (McGuinness is alive). See Tracy though "it offers little to



Regret Macao at Rich, the wife of Break of Day

listen to or think about" (*Daily Telegraph*, February 11, 1973) and "beautiful to watch but taking a long time to say very little... see it for its visual achievement and don't bother to listen to the plot either—you won't find a thing" (*Sunday Telegraph*, February 13, 1973).

This of course, is nonsense. *Break of Day* is an excellent film that been seeing many times based on an original scenario by Glyn Moore at Hanging Rock. Given its somewhat Andrew McFarlane a soldier during World War I who has returned to his home town of Telford, Victoria, partly crippled. He is disturbed by the small town atmosphere and finds it difficult to communicate with his wife, Alice (Sara Kestelman), and he spends as much time away from her as possible, in particular vigorously sheaving rabbits unrelentingly unearthing his memories of Galipoli.

During one of his shearing expeditions he meets Alice (Sara Kestelman) a Bohemian artist who has travelled from Melbourne to start the tendencies. She is a dandy in the counterculture who believes she has worked understanding her, in much the same way they accept Tom, although he refuses to be smugly over their disengagedness either. He and Alice become lovers, he finding in her the missing issue he has been unable to find in his wife. His duties as husband and editor of the town newspaper, whose sub editor Mr. Rossi (John Gammill) is a victim of the pedantry and conservatism that still runs at every level, are neglected. For Alice, who sees in him, ironically,

the true spirit of Australia.

Tom is a cipher, of course. For all those men and women who go off to war only to return to their home towns, be it city or country, to find that they have changed and cannot fit back into the niche they once occupied. Thus re-integration back into society is difficult, she expresses for Tom who has put a bullet in his own feet as a result of the horrors he has seen at Gallipoli.

Tom's problem is that he is still a country-boy gauche, as witness his feelings when Alice's city friends go into myopiaing in the localities. He is morally confronted as the



DOWN'S COUNTRY

But the town's morality is antiseptic. They talk and whisper about Tom and Alice, even the schoolchildren make up snide rhymes, but when Tom comes to the rescue of his town's embattled them at the annual bonfire picnic against a particularly vicious opposition he becomes a hero. In the process up that ensues Tom's being hit in the neck by a deliberately aimed ball from the opposition, Alice's city friends plus in and the sky/country barrier is pulled down—ironically at least.

Tom bows the town's conventionality he is still however, unable to fully accept those of Alice's friends. Their lack of respect for his country values their allegations sharing the town have been accepted at best and for those who fought in the war lead Tom to a cathartic reliving of his battle experiences. As a result he is able to accept himself more honestly but, he is confronted by Alice's ambiguous, indeed, mercantile and although he loves her is unable to completely support her love for her.

When she leaves Telford to return to Melbourne, Tom chase her in his car but stops at a corner as her train passes. The blurry frame of Alice's window is periodically interrupted and he watches it disappear in the distance. Tom will undoubtedly go back to the small town life, to which he no longer belongs, as yet unsure for the life of the day it is in his treasury that he is caught in the neither world of his two existences.

The film is beautifully and sensitively made with superb performances from all concerned. Andrew McFarlane is Tom the right combination of masculinity and sensitivity in contrast and Sara Kestelman's unconventional looks are as essential as the script who brings Tom to the final realisation of his predicament.

Karen Heinman, like Glyn Moore at Hanging Rock, has captured the town environment well but it is above all the climactic cricket match which is undoubtedly one of the greatest moments of screen entertainment. All that remains Telford is the question. It is a bittersweet moment in a film of unusual subtlety and great honesty and consistency.



Sara Kestelman (Alice) & Andrew McFarlane (Tom) in *Break of Day*

BOOKS

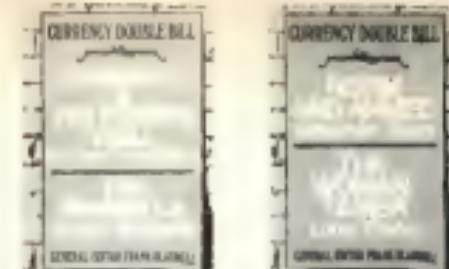
Helen van der Poorten

Romance and The Fourth Wall, by Richard Bradstock, with **The Guerrilla**, by Joseph Mangan. Currency Methuen Drama, Sydney, 1976.

Mirren and Ahmed, by Alexander Biolo with **The Western Lawyer**, by Louis Esson. Currency Methuen Drama, Sydney 1976.

From the jokes about grilles and apes in Nick Lethbridge's prologue to Joseph Mangan's *The Guerrilla* to the direction "You pursued by a grille" in Richard Bradstock's *The Fourth Wall*, Garry Gracy's latest double for neither ticket book plays out its eastern sting. Considering this and the fact that the editors have now chosen to place the notes and comment after them rather than before the acting notes, it is interesting that they continue to pursue a wider public with the theoretical issues raised by each play.

In a recent collection of Bradstock's *Reviews* and *The Fourth Wall*, as well as Mangan's *The Guerrilla*, the universal point of each play is conveyed through distance and differences not necessarily related to the play at all. Much Mangan's play, for instance, we are given a detailed account of Sydney's "Glenfield Soap" of 1968—the insiders which support



why support the play. Certainly these writers have clear causes for anxiety, and in this case I think Garry Gracy's approach pays off, as we have a chance to contrast the ultra-leftist's attack with the rest of the drama. The notes of Mangan's "guerrilla" having so often in a trying letter and other editorial pronouncements while holding the authorities at bay, show up the vacuous social qualities of the playwright, whose works will be hopefully familiar with in this country (he is a New Zealander). There is an extremely red touch of cynicism when the stage protagonist's girlfriend notes "one doesn't begin to be demanded out of one's Art till... and a thousand shades of amazement". The perhaps of this story, the historical background to the revolutionised stage, and Nick Lethbridge's highly theatricated vision of someone in an executive armchair, I have my doubts, however, about

the value of the 1971 press unit cast of an Ensemble Theatre production of the play, as it tends to tell us more about the critics than the play.

Richard Bradstock's interesting and already established writing Bradstock seems to me less well served by the essay as merely as a serious business. In some of the Ensemble's experiences of the play it is set in the home of Mr and Mrs Dawson, who are upset when their son Charlie brings home a grille as a friend and the social implications. It is at once an entertainment piece which anti-war and trade union campaigns should pick-up if they haven't already done so, that I fear the serious" comments might cloud a progressive director. I thought the absence of Sidney Painter et al in David Wilson's *Coming to Dinner?* made the point quite adequately that ultimately Garry Gracy is a

worth writing about the seriousness of his politics, but there is so much else in the book to say that this might not be the place for it. Of course the very afterpiece *The Fourth Wall*, in which the actors for the first matinée will barricade that wall against possible spectators does raise theoretical issues as well as laughter.

The other new double璧—*Buddi Adam and Ahmed* and *Louis Esson's The Western Lawyer* is also packed with statement, much of it this time on urban Australian language.

Presuming as Professor R. D. Eggleton's article on the language in the plays. I am again inclined to wonder what audience the editor hope to appeal to with this edition. Like Biolo prior, in print for the second time with *Currency*, is such a well known contemporary classic that such inaccuracy might be appropriate, but Esson, perhaps the *Ensemble*'s playwright, is as little known in the 1970's as were *Reservoir* etc. in the 1950's and that some theoretical recreation beyond that in the brief review at the end of the book might have helped spread his name.

But on reflection all of my reluctance reflect the fear that propagandistic performances of these double璧 plays might not set the world for the best. The plays themselves are all capable of abuse and *Reservoir*'s output of less has been so prolific that they have probably reached the stage where they can experiment in the search for a wider reading public.

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Producer, Ken Healey, designs from Western Australian Opera Company, conductor, James McCarthy, Robyn Donald as Ginevra, Kelli Harrington as Don Pasquale, Colin Slater as Melitone, Fran Bowly as Norina.

CANBERRA PLAYHOUSE

The Miserables of Benjamin Franklin by Steve J. Scott, Dennis Richard Wherren starring Geddes Chester (Mar 26, 12th Apr 2nd)

THEATRE THREE (47 4222)

Canberra Repertory Society

Cathy by Alain de Greef, director Joyce MacFarlane, March 31-April 23, Thurs, Fri & Sat night. Runs during Canberra Week

NEW SOUTH WALES

ACTORS COMPANY (0800 2930)

The Crooner, by Harold Pinter, directed by Alan Peacock (to Apr 10)

AUSTRALIAN BALLET (057 3033)

Sydney Opera House 13 0599

Opera Theatre, The Armada, July the 1st and Monday the 3rd (Mar 24-Apr 5 also Apr 11)

Bustle, (Apr 5)

Seminar, New Walk, Juniper, Ryecroft

(Apr 31-April 15-32)

AUSTRALIAN OPERA (26 2978)

Sydney Opera House 13 0580

Concert Hall in association with A.B.C.T. Peter War

Wiesner in German, Apr 2

Concert performance conducted by Carlo Felice Cillano with Renold David as Farafel, Denise Shanks as Ginevra, John Shaw as Amfortas, Lorraine Koopel Winter as Kunzly, Sydnei Symphonic Orchestra, Sydney Philharmonic Choir

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Ufford, Theatre produced like the Air 90

Find Your Way Home by John Hopkins, directed

by Bruce M. Daly, designed by Vernon Wim

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directed by Raymond O'Connell, The Advisor,

by John Mulgan and Louise, by Richard

Tulloch both directed by John Murray all

designed by Yvonne Tait (Schools tour of eastern and north west New South Wales from March

23)

BALMAIN BUDJU (027 3865)

Phantom of the Opera, by Reg Livermore, directed by Peter Barry (contemporary)

BOHARANT'S THEATRE

RESTAURANT (367 2566 or 367 2566)

Owner of a Whore, by Ross Fitter and John

McKinnon (contemporary)

RONDI PAVILION THEATRE (30 7211 or 29 8335)

The Hot Family Show, by the Australian

Funtime Group, directed with the assistance of Bob Thompson, No Apr 23

CANBERRA OPERA

Don Pasquale (Dioniso) in English On tour

from April 10 to May 12

CARLTON THEATRE (03 2222)

Theatres in Carlton, Melbourne, Victoria

from April 10 to May 12

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Bernard Jay (to Apr 8) *Re: Act* 90
Cast: a one man show on the life and songs of Harry Lauder devised and presented by Jim Lessen (from Apr 13)

UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES OPERA (1862 3412)

Science Theatre (Enclosed Scarlet) (March 26-29, April 10) Producer, Bernd Brinkhoff; designer, Fiona Reilly; musical director, Roger Cawell

QUEENSLAND

ARTS THEATRE (38 2344)

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? by Edward Albee, directed by George Roberto (to April 9, West 8-15 p.m.)
Moby the Dopey FM Louse, by Roger Akroyd, directed by Kevin Railwaine (openings April 16-18-19 at 8 p.m.)

Alors et Bientôt, directed by Keith Sparks and Jay McKee (begins 26 March, every Sat 3.00 p.m. till further notice)

LA BOITE (38 2296)

Season of Three Queensland Playwrights
In Memory of a Friend, by Giselle L. Davis; *The Kiss and the Kiss*, by Jim Brewster; *Two-Dee*, by Lorna Bell (Wed-Sat at 8 p.m. Sun 3.00 p.m., 6.30 p.m.-8.00 p.m. Opening March 26 with *In Memory of a Friend*; thereafter 10-11-12-13 April Except March 29 and April 21)

CAMERATA THEATRE (38 8581)

Antony and Cleopatra by William Shakespeare, director David Stobie (from April 31)

COMMUNITY THEATRE (358 9311 A/H 358 9336)

Romeo and Juliet, directed by Laurette Hall (Mar 31-Apr 2, 4pm, 6 & 8)

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE (221 2377)

Doctor in Love, by Richard Gordon (Apr 16-May 7 Mon-Sat 8p.m. Mat-Wed & Sat 2pm)
POPULAR THEATRE TROUPE (38 1745)

Midsummer's Headship and Fall Out and Falstaff are in the repertoire. Generic March 19-Easter (re 19 April Glazebrook, Rockhampton and Novia. Ring studio manager for details)

QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY (221 5177)

Holmes' Choice by Harold Pethouse, directed by Murray Fay (staged by Peter Cooke) (to April 3 Tues-Sat 8 p.m. Mat-Wed & Sat) *The Merchant of Venice*, by William Shakespeare directed by Alan Edwards, designed by James Ridewood (Apr 13-20 Tues-Sat 8 p.m.

TWELFTH NIGHT (52 5889)

Perseverance Gothic, by J. B. Priestley, directed by John Whitley (to 26 March)

HER MAJESTY'S (Brooklyn) (51 2292)

The Election of Benjamin Franklin by Steve J. Sizer; *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* by Ken Kesey (April 14th 30th)
Snow Tide, first year with Greens Mandell and Natives Hayes (March 16th-April 24th)

LITTLE THEATRE, Adelaide University (223 8810)

The Government and the Rebels by Leo Bassi, director, Robert Sims for the Globe Theatre Company (to March 29th)

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN THEATRE COMPANY (51 5151)

Street for Sounds by R. B. Sheridan, director, Colin George (to April 2nd)

The Cherry Orchard by Anton Chekhov, Director, Colin George (begins April 11)

UNION HALL, Theatra Guide (22 34233)

Meat by Eugene Ionesco, Director, Martin Charnin (to April 26th)

TASMANIA

THEATRE ROYAL (24 62961)

Sound of Music, Director, John Unwin (to March 18th Sat 2nd)

Tommy, Peter Casevay (Apr 4th 10th)
Court drama, Director, John Unwin (Apr 18th-30th)

VICTORIA

AUSTRALIAN OPERA

Princess Theatre (5502 13560)
Madame Butterfly (Puccini) in Italian, Mar 24-25, 28, April 1, 4, 7, 13, 16 (mat), 19. Producer, John Collier; designer, Michael Bennett (continued w/ Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, *Carlo*, *Felicia Ollman*, *Merita Beagle* as *Barbara Callander* or *Robin Goodfellow* as *Puck*, *Ronald Macmillan* as *John Pringle* as *Shazzan*, *Lesley Bentler* or *Jennifer Birmingham* as *Susanna*).

La Bohème in French, Mar 25-30, April 5, 14, 19 (level 2B). Producer, Norman Ayson; designer, Diamond Digby; conductor, Peter Robinson; Jose Carreras or Rhonda Bruce as *Leontine*; Ham Wildes or Arleen Auger as *Germont*; Robert Allman as *Nathaniel*; Margot Missin as *Mallika*; Graeme Lowe as *Hoff*; John Pringle as *London*; Terence as *Frederick*. *Comedy* (Brecht) in French, Apr 2, 6, 21, 23, 27, 31 (mat). Producer and designer, Terri Longwood; conductor, Russell Chinnell; Heather Bell, Margaret Elkins or Suzanne Steele as *Germe*; Rob Steeves or Reginald Birrell as *Don Juan*; Isobel Buchanan or Dallas Cambridge as *Micado*; Raymond Myers as *Eduardo Alfonso* (Brecht); in German, April 23, 25, 28, 30 (mat). Conductor, Allen Last; conductor, Carlo Felice Ollman; Lane Knott, Jennifer McNeice, Gertie Grant as *Luisana*; Bertie Parker or Cynthia Johnson as *Marielena*; Ronald Dowd as *Florentina*; Graeme Ewart or Alison Austin as *Jacquinto*; John Shaw as *Pierre*; Neil Munro, Steven or Donald Shanks as *Rafael*; Robert Altman as *Gregor*; Odile as *Don Fernando*.

COMEDY THEATRE (6833 3211)

The Two of Us by Michael Frayn, director Peter Lou; designer, Terry Parsons (to April 16)

The Measure of His Company by Samuel Taylor with Dennis O'Dea Skinner, Michael Peter Dean, designer Terry Parsons (from April 13th)

CYRILS THEATRE RESTAURANT

Cocktails at 77 (continuing)

LA MAMA (347 60851)

Amper by John Weid (to March 21)

An event by Lloyd Jones (March 21-April 4)

An event by James Clayton (Apr 2-10)

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

(165 11061)

Adolescent Theater School (to Skidelsky by Skidelsky, director Ray Lawler (to April 23) *Russell Skidelsky*, *The Fall Guy* by Linda Arnesson, director Mick Rodger (from March 28)

MTC-TIE

Company A: *St. Kilda* (to March 26), *Deathfield* (Mar 26-Apr 15); *Mauritius* (from April 16)

Company B: *Hawthorne* (to March 25), *See Hill* (Mar 25-Apr 15); *Wastely / Morish* (from April 16)

PLAYBOX THEATRE (03 48886)

After 1st and with Colleen Mann and Ron Chisholm (continuing)

PRAM FACTORY (0347 71031)

It's Dangerous for Lightning to Know by Steve Morten, director Paul Hanley (to April 24)

REGENT PALACE

The Rocky Horror Show (Continuing)

ST MARTIN'S THEATRE (054 60006)

Leading Lady with Bill Patterson (continuing)

TOTAL THEATRE (002 4991)

Let My People Come by Earl White Jr, director Paul Bailey (continuing)

WINDSOR REGIS THEATRE

RESTAURANT (51 69371)

Don of Broken River, by Tony Slatley and Gary Riley (continuing)

FOR SCHOOLS

Pagan Puppet Theatre: *Woolly and the Moon Poop*, a marionette play (March 18 & 28) School performance each Tues & Fri during March 19th to 31st & 1st April

Vietnam State Opera: *Deathray Goodroad* (revises Dr Whiplash and the Morale Musty Tenby) by Patti Patrician (Munich 1st to 16th)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

HOLE IN THE WALL (51 24631)

At War with Shear, a doublebill of G.B. Shaw one-acters

Man of Destiny and *O'Farrell's VC*, directed by John Merton (March 18-April 16)

PLAYHOUSE (25 3341)

The Deserters by David Williamson directed by Anne Neate (March 24-April 16)

On Your Toes (Schools): *Caged in Xmas* by Simon Hammerton, directed by Andrew Ross (see details for bookings)

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

AMP THEATRE (51 0451)

Group theatre (to March 26th)

FESTIVAL CENTRE (51 22921)

Flake, Open air theatre (to March 22nd)

He also S.A.T.C.